

# THE REVIEW OF ENGLISH STUDIES

NEW SERIES, VOLUME V

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# THE REVIEW OF ENGLISH STUDIES

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Edited by

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## TRADITIONAL THEMES IN *THE WANDERER* AND *THE SEAFARER*

By I. L. GORDON

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THERE is an increasing tendency in the approach to *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* to discard theories of composite origin in favour of 'interpretations' mainly directed to demonstrating that they are homogeneous Christian poems. These new interpretations, however, are bewildering in their diversity, and where the older process of structural dissection was arbitrary, the newer approach is often no less arbitrary in that it disregards general poetic impression and treats the poem in isolation, with little reference to the literary genre to which it belongs. As an (admittedly extreme) example, Mr. O. S. Anderson interprets *The Seafarer* as an allegorical representation of the life of man in the image of a sea-journey.<sup>1</sup> Yet, apart from the fact that the supposed allegory needs an ominously tortuous explanation, to read an abstract meaning into *The Seafarer*, with its strongly subjective mood, seems a denial of much that is self-evident in the poem, and lifts it out of its natural place among other Old English elegies of similar poetic pattern.

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These elegies (including the two elegiac passages of *Beowulf*, lines 2247-66 and 2444-59) clearly belong to a very narrow tradition. Their poets had only a limited range of ideas and poetic motives and diction. To try to understand one of them in isolation, therefore, is to see it out of perspective. The solitary state of the seafarer, for instance, becomes a less significant circumstance in itself when loneliness is a characteristic of all these elegiac figures; the wanderer's preoccupation with the transience of things becomes less simply a part of the Christian theme of the mutability of earthly, compared with the permanence of heavenly, values when we find the same preoccupation with transience in other elegies and in *Beowulf*, not always with a Christian relevance. And the same considerations apply to interpretation of detail: when it is suggested that the poet of *The Wanderer* equates *wyrd* with 'Fortune' of Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*,<sup>2</sup> a comparison of the use of *wyrd* in other Old English poems may make us doubt whether the poet would go so far for an idea which was evidently a commonplace of his own poetic tradition.

A thorough investigation into the poetic environment of these poems—

<sup>1</sup> 'The Seafarer', *Bulletin of the Royal Society of Letters of Lund* (1937-8), vol. i.

<sup>2</sup> R. M. Lumiansky, 'The Dramatic Structure of the Old English *Wanderer*', *Neophilologus*, xxxiv (1950), 111.

the background of thought from which they drew their ideas, the nature of their poetic pattern, and the meaning and association (to a contemporary audience) of their terms—would do much to illuminate their meaning. Though such an investigation is impossible here, the present study is an attempt to show how an approach on these lines might be brought to bear on one of the major problems of these poems which is still in dispute, i.e. the nature of the relation between the dramatic theme and the Christian moralizing. It is a problem which depends largely for its solution on the view we take of the dramatic theme, whether we agree with the recent critics who see in it a Christian purpose directly leading to the moralizing, or whether we see it as an essentially secular theme, less intimately connected with the moralizing.

One question immediately presents itself. Are the wanderer and the seafarer specifically Christian figures? And this is a problem which has been given an interesting turn recently by Dr. Dorothy Whitelock's suggestion that the seafarer represents a *peregrinus*,<sup>1</sup> and by Mrs. Nora K. Chadwick's statement that *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* are 'probably of direct Celtic inspiration', and 'essentially the poetry associated in Celtic countries with the Culdees or *peregrini*, the "recluses" and "pilgrims" of the Celtic Church'.<sup>2</sup> There is certainly much in these poems which cannot easily be explained by direct descent from the Germanic tradition of poetry, as we know it; the poetic pattern of elegiac lament combined with sententious, gnomic material, and the heightened consciousness of natural surroundings, characteristic of these poems, may well owe much to Celtic influence. But how far these poems are to be associated with the *peregrini* or with specifically hermit poetry is a more difficult question. In neither poem do we find those special characteristics that distinguish the Irish hermit poems—the 'eye washed miraculously clear by a continual spiritual exercise',<sup>3</sup> the warmth of Christian devotion and sense of nearness to God.<sup>4</sup> Thus, where the hermit poems are remarkable for their acute observation of little things, in the Old English poems the interest in natural surroundings goes hardly beyond a consciousness of the moods of weather and season; and where there is implicit in hermit poetry an essential spirituality, in the Old English poems the Christian attitude takes a more general admonitory tone.

There is a much stronger resemblance in *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*

<sup>1</sup> 'The Interpretation of *The Seafarer*', *Early Cultures of North-West Europe* (H. M. Chadwick Memorial Studies, Cambridge, 1950), pp. 261-72.

<sup>2</sup> *The Heritage of Early Britain* (London, 1952), ch. v, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> R. Flower, *The Irish Tradition* (Oxford, 1947), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. the poet who wrote of his little hut: 'My darling, God of Heaven, was the thatcher that roofed it'; see K. Jackson, *Early Celtic Nature Poetry* (Cambridge, 1935), p. 3.



to Celtic elegy, where the speaker is often a wanderer or an exile who is contrasting his former comfort or happiness with his present miserable condition.<sup>1</sup> But the exile or wanderer of elegy (Celtic or English) is a figure in a similar situation to that of a hermit, and it would be an easy matter for the poets of *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, familiar with the idea of a *peregrinus* from contemporary life or from hermit poetry, to add some touches of a Christian hermit to their otherwise elegiac figure. Thus the poet might have had a *peregrinus* in mind when he described the wanderer as an *anhaga*, 'one who meditates alone',<sup>2</sup> who looks for grace and the mercy of God (lines 1-2) and *gesæt him sundor æt rune* (line 111).<sup>3</sup> But the general picture of the wanderer is that of the exile of elegy, contrasting his former happy life in the hall with his present misery and loneliness. The incongruity need not concern us unduly. Professor K. Jackson has shown that the distinction between elegy and hermit poetry is sometimes blurred: 'characteristics of the one group intrude into a poem belonging to the other because of the similarity of the scene'.<sup>4</sup> And even if there has not been any influence of hermit poetry on *The Wanderer*, it is natural for a poet writing in terms of a strong poetic tradition to introduce ideas which belong to his own real and present world: when we find in *Lycidas* an abrupt transition from the world of ancient Greece to 'the pilot of the Galilean lake' we accept it as a phenomenon of poetry. In *The Wanderer* the stylized nature of the elegiac or dramatic theme puts it in the timeless world of poetry, but the Christian colouring given to the *anhaga* belongs to the real and present world.

The dramatic situation of *The Seafarer* presents a more difficult problem. First, we are not told why the seafarer wishes to 'seek the land of strangers far hence'; and secondly, the seafaring theme has little apparent

<sup>1</sup> See K. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Anhaga* (*anhoga*) is probably to be connected with *hogian* 'to think' rather than with *haga* 'enclosure', since weak masculine nouns normally denote active agents, so that *haga* is properly that which encloses. *Anhaga* therefore would seem a particularly apt term for a recluse; but we must not press the term too far, since it was used more generally to describe one who is isolated, exiled, or bereft of friends. In the Lambeth Psalter 101. 8 *solitarius* is rendered *anhaga oððe anwuniende*; in a metrical prayer (Grein-Wülker, ii. 221) *anhaga* is a joyless exile; *earn anhoga* used in *The Wanderer*, l. 40, is also applied to Beowulf (*Beowulf*, 2368) as a lonely survivor, and in the Cotton Gnomes Verses to the lonely wolf.

<sup>3</sup> If this means 'sat apart in private meditation', however, it is an unusual meaning of *sittan æt rune*, which elsewhere refers to sitting in council or consultation. But according to the Anchorite Rule an anchorite might have 'a few religious men' to visit him, and there may be a reference here to such consultation. K. Jackson has remarked that Irish hermit poems are sometimes a putting into 'highly poetical form' of the Anchorite Rules (*op. cit.*, p. 105). It may be worth noting that in the 'Rule of St. Columba' the anchorite is warned against talking with one who grumbles about what he is not able to remedy; cf. lines 112b-113 of *The Wanderer*.

<sup>4</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 121.

connexion with the Christian moralizing of the latter half of the poem. Thus Professor C. W. Kennedy writes: 'It seems likely that we have here to do with a poem which, though a unit, divides somewhat definitely into two contrasting sections generally corresponding to two types of experience in the life of the unknown author. Conversion to the Christian faith may well have separated adventurous seafaring years from a later period of religious devotion.'<sup>1</sup> But must we look to external causes in this way to explain the phenomenon, as though this were historical document, and not poetry? Whatever the explanation we should probably seek it rather in the nature of the poetic genre than in autobiography. Dr. Whitelock's theory that the seafarer represents a *peregrinus* is attractive because it would explain both the seafarer's motive and the presence in a seafaring poem of Christian moralizing; but it is not an answer to all the problems the poem presents, and, moreover, it raises its own problems. For if the seafarer has usually been regarded as a secular figure it is because that is the impression given in the poem; and if many readers have failed to find continuity between the seafaring theme and the Christian moralizing it is because there is, in fact, an abrupt change of theme and tone at line 64b. Clearly the genesis of the poem was not a simple one.

Whatever the origin of elegy as a genre, both English and Celtic examples<sup>2</sup> indicate that it was, from an early date, blended with the gnomic tradition. And in Christian elegy this sententious or didactic tendency merges into Christian moralizing. But except in the admonitory passages there is little that is explicitly Christian in these poems, and it is not always easy to decide whether a passage is intended to have a Christian significance or not. The general ideas which constitute the basic themes of these poems are all commonplaces—reflections on the power of fate, the transience of life, &c.—and though there is nothing in these commonplaces which lies outside the teachings of the Church, many of them show a close similarity to sententious passages in early English and Scandinavian poetry which we generally regard, from their context, as deriving mainly from pagan ideas. It is not surprising, therefore, to find some critics assuming that in these poems too the ideas have a pagan significance. Dr. B. F. Huppé in a sensitive if somewhat over-subtle study of the poem sees in the theme of *The Wanderer* a contrast between Christian and pagan ethics.<sup>3</sup>

But what in fact is there in *The Wanderer* (or *The Seafarer*) that can be described as pagan? There is a use of terms of thought which we associate with pagan ideas. But we know from our language today that the linguistic

<sup>1</sup> *The Earliest English Poetry* (Oxford, 1943), p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> See K. Jackson, *op. cit.*, ch. iii.

<sup>3</sup> 'The Wanderer: Theme and Structure', *J.E.G.P.*, xlii (1943), 516-38. See R. M. Lumiansky, *op. cit.*, and Stanley B. Greenfield, *J.E.G.P.*, l (1951), 454-65, for detailed criticism of Huppé's analysis.

remains of outmoded ideas linger long after they have lost their full meaning: we 'thank our lucky stars' with little thought of medieval astrology. And in poetry, especially, older terms which have poetic associations are often felt to have more emotional and imaginative force because of those associations. When the poet of *The Wanderer* sees in the scene of ruin the work of *ælda scyppend* 'Creator of men', he sees it also as the work of *wyrd seo mære* 'Fate the mighty'. The distinction is probably stylistic, since one occurs in a descriptive and reflective passage, the other in an emotional outburst. But God the omnipotent and fate the inexorable are equally regarded in the poem as the terrible force that destroys the work of man.<sup>1</sup> *Wyrd* was not a sort of pagan god: it was a poetic term, often personified, for what is a timeless concept, pagan only in its associations, the concept of inescapable event. This is so close to one aspect of the Christian God that *metod* 'ordainer' becomes a term applicable to either. In the plural *wyrd* seems to mean events themselves, or even deeds.<sup>2</sup> And line 107 of *The Wanderer*, *onwendeð wyrd a gesceaft weoruld under heofonum*, is probably only a fine poetic expression of the idea that everything on earth is changed (or destroyed) in the course of events. When Dr. Huppé sees in the poem a contrast between the mercy of God and the harshness of fate,<sup>3</sup> he forgets that it is *ælda scyppend* who 'thus laid waste this habitation' (l. 85). And similarly with the 'pagan ethics' which Dr. Huppé distinguishes in lines 65b-72: the insistence on the virtues of courage, generosity, and prowess may be pagan in age and emphasis (cf. *Hávamál*), but these are virtues any Christian may admire.

It is a far cry, however, from a recognition that there is nothing distinctively pagan in *The Wanderer* to the view that it is 'wholly Christian in tone'.<sup>4</sup> For instance, though *wyrd* does not necessarily imply pagan belief, can we say that it is 'a synonym for God', or that it has 'lost all heathen associations for those who wrote Old English poetry'?<sup>5</sup> Neither the etymological nor the contextual associations of *wyrd* would naturally suggest 'God' to an Anglo-Saxon audience: etymologically it would suggest 'event, experience, destiny'; and it is used most frequently as a poetic personification in contexts which express or imply the idea that no man can resist fate—an idea familiar in Scandinavian pagan poetry as well as in early Old English poetry. The fact that this idea is used in Christian poems as a reminder, in familiar form, of the ultimate helplessness of man

<sup>1</sup> See B. J. Timmer, 'Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon Poetry', *Neophilologus*, xxvi (1940-1), 24-33 and 213-28. Not all his views are accepted here.

<sup>2</sup> As in *Beowulf*, 3030: *he ne leag fela wyrd a ne worda*.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., p. 524.

<sup>4</sup> See R. M. Lumiansky, op. cit., p. 105.

<sup>5</sup> See B. J. Timmer, 'Heathen and Christian Elements in Old English Poetry', *Neophilologus*, xxix (1944), 181.

('Fate is stronger, God mightier, than any man can imagine', *Seafarer* 115b-116) does not make it, itself, into a specifically Christian idea. The helplessness of man against fate is in pagan poetry an integral part of the general preoccupation with the woes of man,<sup>1</sup> as it is in these Old English poems. This 'doom and gloom' theme may be used in Christian poems as a useful introduction to the Christian lesson that we must strive on earth to win the security of everlasting life (a lesson implied in *The Wanderer* and made explicit in *The Seafarer*); but that does not give the theme itself a 'wholly Christian tone'. It is, in fact, a theme so strongly self-contained in its own melancholy that the Christian message of hope comes with a certain incongruity—an incongruity which Dr. Huppé seeks to explain by his theory of pagan figures, but which is more probably attributable to dependence on a poetic tradition which could not be completely reconciled, poetically, with the Christian purpose.

And it is better to admit this incongruity than to distort the poetic theme, as Dr. Lumiansky does with *The Wanderer* when he describes it as an account of 'the eardstapa's victory over dejection', 'the eardstapa's explanation of why he is no longer saddened by his exiled condition'.<sup>2</sup> For lines 58-59:

For þon ic gepencan ne mæg geond þas woruld  
for hwan modsefa min ne sweorce . . .

which Dr. Lumiansky explains as meaning 'the wanderer cannot understand why he is not saddened [when he considers the sorrows of the world. . . . The reason is that he has gained wisdom through experience]', surely mean: 'Therefore I can think of no reason in this world why my heart should not grow dark . . .', i.e. the wanderer *is* saddened and sees no reason in this world (no reason at all) why he should not be. There is no 'victory over dejection'; the wanderer is melancholy throughout because it is this world and the sufferings of this world which concern him. Not until the final lines of the poem is the comfort of the Christian moral offered, that security is to be found in the mercy of God.

It is in the limited range of the ideas expressed or implied, and in the sequence of thought, that the dependence of these poems on the older world of gnomic wisdom is clearest. For instance, the wanderer realizes that understanding comes through experience and suffering—*wat se þe cunnað . . .* (l. 29), *wat se þe sceal forþolian . . .* (ll. 37-38)—and concludes therefore that 'a man cannot become wise until he has had many winters on earth' (ll. 64-65). This corresponds to the gnomic idea, 'the old man is

<sup>1</sup> See Blanche C. Williams, *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon* (New York, 1914), pp. 28 and 46.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit., p. 108.

wisest, with the experience of years behind him, who has suffered much' (Cotton Gnostic Verses 11-12). But whereas it is only by doing violence to the text that we can find in the wanderer's reflections the attitude which Christian wisdom would bring, it was an axiom of this early poetic 'philosophy' that wisdom brings melancholy. 'A wise man's heart is seldom glad', says *Hávamál* (stanza 55). And 'Seldom does a wise man rejoice free from sorrow', says the Old English *Precepts* (l. 54), a poem which comes between *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* in the Exeter Book, and shows a similar blend of ancient wisdom with Christian admonition.

There is a similar dependence on older poetic thought in the theme of the transience of life. Dr. Lumiansky remarks: 'But as everybody knows, and as Timmer observed, mutability—earthly insecurity—is an important Christian theme, which the *Wanderer* poet need not have inherited from his pagan forefathers.'<sup>1</sup> But it is not so much a question of whether he need have, as whether he did; nor is there any reason to assume that he knew the theme from one source only. The fact that the transience of life is an important Christian theme does not seem to have erased from the poet's memory the treatment of the theme in earlier poetry (and why should it?). When he concludes his great final lament for the mutability of things with the words:

Her bið feoh læne, her bið freond læne,  
her bið mon læne, her bið mæg læne:  
call þis eorþan gesteal idel weorpeð . . .

'Here is wealth transient, here is friend transient, here is man transient, here is kin transient: all that has been established in this world turns to emptiness', the passage owes its poetic force largely to the fact that it echoes a familiar poetic statement. So, too, the Scandinavian form of the same statement, which appears in *Hávamál* (stanza 76):

Deyr fé, deyja frændr,  
deyr sjalfr it sama . . .

'Cattle die, kinsfolk die, one dies oneself just the same', is echoed by a later poet in his eulogy of King Hákon:

Deyr fé, deyja frændr,  
eyðisk land ok lað.

'Cattle die, kinsfolk die, land and realm are laid waste.' And just as the Scandinavian poet has used the ancient statement for his special purpose, to heighten the effect of his lament for Hákon, so the poet of *The Wanderer* has used it for his Christian purpose: the reiteration of *her* and the insertion of *þis eorþan* bring the theme to the brink of the Christian moral that

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 105.



follows, the moral that security is to be found in God and everlasting life. But it cannot be said that so slight a transformation of the ancient theme makes it, in itself, into a Christian theme; for there is an essential difference between the old poetic view of transience, which sees it as a tragic fact, a part of the woes of men, and the Christian view which sees it as a proof of the vanity of worldly things. What Professor J. R. R. Tolkien remarks of *Beowulf* is true also of *The Wanderer*: 'Its author is still concerned primarily with man *on earth*, rehandling in a new perspective an ancient theme: that man, each man and all men, and all their works must die. A theme no Christian need despise. Yet *this theme plainly would not be so treated*, but for the nearness of a pagan time.'<sup>1</sup> The nearness comes largely from a dependence on an older poetic tradition, which had its own philosophy.

In *The Seafarer* an understanding of the older ideas of transience is more important for an understanding of the poem, since there the whole transition from the seafaring theme to the moralizing, in lines 64b-79a, is accomplished by a deliberate expansion of the older implications of the theme into a fuller Christian significance. In pagan literature the transience of life seems to have been used as an incentive to bravery, a reminder of the futility of caution. 'A coward thinks he will live for ever if he avoids battle; but old age will give him no quarter even if spears do' (*Hávamál*, stanza 16). The seafarer uses the transience motive similarly to reinforce his decision to set sail again: 'For the joys of the Lord are more precious to me than this dead life on land, transitory as it is. I do not believe that earthly prosperity remains for ever. Rather will one of three things, always in all circumstances, turn into uncertainty the duration of one's life:<sup>2</sup> sickness or old age or violence will wrest the life from a man doomed to depart' (64b-71). The seafarer has made it abundantly clear that seafaring is a dangerous business; he has even implied in the foreboding of the cuckoo's cry that death is imminent, but he chooses death (*Dryhtnes dreamas*) because nothing is to be gained by choosing the safe and easy, but less

<sup>1</sup> 'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, xxii (1936), 265.

<sup>2</sup> *Simle preora sum þinga gehwylce ær his tiddege* (MS. *tide ge*) to *tweon weorþeð*. This new interpretation is suggested as being more suitable to the context than earlier ones (see G. P. Krapp and E. V. K. Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, London, 1936, p. 297), which take *ær his tiddege* (or *ær his tid aga*) as meaning 'before his death' ('before his time departs'); since it can hardly be said that old age becomes a matter of uncertainty to a man before his death, or before his time departs. The point of the passage is that no man knows how or when he will die, but die he must (cf. *Beowulf*, 3062-5 and 1761-8). In the only other occurrence (*Genesis*, 1165) *tiddag* means 'duration of life, lifetime'. For the meaning 'sooner, rather' for *ær* cf. *Beowulf*, 1371-2, and *Christ*, 1056; and for the use of a dative of reference with *weorþan* to, 'become, turn to', cf. *Beowulf*, 460, *weorþ he Heapolafe to handbonan*.

adventurous, course—the 'dead' life on land<sup>1</sup>—since no one can be certain how he will meet his death, but die he must. As a heathen warrior puts it: 'His final fate carries off every living man; doom is not to be averted by skulking.'<sup>2</sup>

But in *The Seafarer*, of course, it is not so simple as that. The very fact that death has become *Dryhtnes dreamas* is enough to give the passage another, Christian implication: the seafarer chooses 'the joys of the Lord', i.e. eternal life, because he knows that earthly prosperity and life itself are transitory; and the traditional reasoning still applies. Hroþgar advises Beowulf to choose *ece rædas* for similar reasons, because sickness or violence or 'terrible old age' will put an end to his strength one day (ll. 1751-66). So here we have the transience theme used as an incentive, not to physical courage, but to Christian endeavour; as a reminder of the futility, not of caution, but of trusting to this world's prosperity. In *The Seafarer* the older implication of the transience theme is retained in that his longing to sail again shows a heroic disregard for his life, but in lines 64b-71 the emphasis is shifted from the heroic to the Christian point of view. The transition is abrupt, and gives a new complexion to the theme: the 'dead life on land' which the seafarer is rejecting emerges now for the first time as the spiritually dead life of worldly prosperity. But abruptness is characteristic of early Old English poetry, and especially of Christian elegy, where it seems to have been part of the poetic method to present themes familiar in secular poetry and then to expand them into a Christian significance.

The same process is still clearer in the lines that follow: 'And so for every man the praise [*lof*] of the living who commemorate him is the best memorial, which he must earn, before he has to depart, by helpful actions on earth against the malice of foes, opposing the devil with noble deeds, so that the children of men will extol him, and his praise [*lof*] live for ever among the angels, the glory of eternal life, bliss among the noblest' (72-79a). It is a clumsy passage syntactically and logically: the poet evidently wishes to say that, since men wish to have posthumous fame, the best kind is that obtained by deeds which also earn them the bliss of Heaven. Coming as it does immediately after the observations about the transience of life, it is clearly following a traditional sequence of ideas ('Each of us must suffer an end to his life in this world: let him who can win fame for himself before he dies. That is best for a warrior after he is

<sup>1</sup> It is a mistake to interpret *his deade lif* (l. 65) as 'this mortal life' (see C. W. Kennedy, op. cit., p. 111). It is not life on earth that is referred to, but life on land. *Deade* here means rather 'sluggish, inactive', as in the Exeter Gnostic Verses: *deop deada wæg dyrne bið lengest* (l. 78), which is probably the old equivalent of the modern 'still waters run deep'. See Krapp and Dobbie, *The Exeter Book*, p. 306, and cf. Chaucer, *Parl. of Foules*, 187, *colde welles stremes nothyng dede*.

<sup>2</sup> Saxo Grammaticus, *Gesta Danorum*, trans. O. Elton (London, 1894), p. 259.

dead', *Beowulf*, 1386-9; 'Cattle die, kinsfolk die, one dies oneself just the same; I know one thing that never dies, the fame of every dead man', *Hávamál*, 77). And, as Professor Tolkien has remarked: 'it shows a modification of heathen *lof* in two directions: first in making the deeds which win *lof* resistance to spiritual foes . . .; secondly in enlarging *lof* to include the angels and the bliss of Heaven'; and he concludes: 'This is a passage which from its syntax alone may with unusual certainty be held to have suffered revision and expansion.'<sup>1</sup>

But there is surely no need to deduce from the syntax alone that there has been revision—that the transformation was not the poet's own manipulation of a familiar theme. For the clumsiness of the syntax is almost certainly due to the awkwardness of the reasoning which has to transform *lof*, the praise of one's fellows, into *lof mid englum* 'praise among the angels'; and that remains the same whoever wrote the passage. But to one familiar from pagan poetry with the idea of fame as the only answer to the transience of life *lof mid englum* might seem a not unnatural description of eternal life. It becomes, in fact, a play upon ideas, since *lof* in Christian use is commonly used of the praise of God.

Thus the transition in *The Seafarer* from the seafaring theme to the Christian moralizing is seen to depend quite simply on an expansion into a Christian significance of the traditional theme of the transience of life and its related theme of fame after death. The problem remains of *why* the seafarer wishes to sail again. W. W. Lawrence's suggestion that he was drawn by the irresistible attraction of the sea<sup>2</sup> is, unfortunately, based on an inaccurate paraphrase of lines 33b-47, which describe, not a 'longing' for the sea, but the anxiety and weariness that a seafarer feels. For instance, Lawrence evidently interpreted lines 44-47 to mean that the seafarer takes no pleasure in anything else except the sea.

Ne biþ him to hearpan hyge ne to hringþege,  
ne to wife wyn ne to worulde hyht,  
ne ymbe owiht elles, nefne ymb yða gewealc,  
ac a hafað longunge se þe on lagu fundað.

But *ymb(e)* can hardly be construed with *wyn* or *hyht*; more probably the second line of the passage here quoted is in parenthesis, and *ymb(e)* of the third line refers back to *hyge* (which may naturally be followed by either *to* or *ymb*, like the related verb (*hycgan*): 'His thought is not on the harp, nor on the receiving of rings; he has no joy in woman nor worldly pleasure; nor (is his thought) about anything else except the rolling of the waves, for he who ventures on the sea always has a troubled mind.'

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 282.

<sup>2</sup> 'The Wanderer and The Seafarer', *J.E.G.P.*, iv (1902), 466.



It is true that lines 36-38 describe the 'desire of the heart' that urges (*monað*) his spirit to 'seek the land of strangers far hence'. But the use here (and also in lines 50 and 53 where the urge is again mentioned) of the verb *monian*, which usually has an admonitory significance ('urge upon one what ought to be done'), indicates that the desire was no mere response to the call of the sea.

If we accept Dr. Whitelock's theory that the seafarer was intended to represent a *peregrinus*, then his urge to 'seek the land of strangers' in spite of his dread of the sea becomes understandable; the use of the verb *monian* in reference to that urge becomes natural; and the identification of 'this dead life on land' with the transitory life of worldly prosperity becomes less obscure. But there still remains the difficulty that the actual impression we are given of the seafarer hardly suggests a Christian pilgrim or hermit. Until the Christian significance emerges at line 64b, the theme follows mainly the conventional pattern of secular elegy, in that it is lament, largely retrospective, about an exile's external situation and his sufferings, contrasted with the happiness or comfort or security of some other life he has known. The only Christian reference in this part is in line 43, where the power of God to determine the fate of a seafarer is mentioned.

Mr. R. H. W. Rosteutscher has put forward the interesting theory that in Anglo-Saxon elegy, under the influence of Christian ideas, the state of exile itself, its loneliness and suffering, came to be regarded in poetic convention as a sort of 'pilgrim's progress' that would bring the sufferer nearer to the hope of heavenly life; and he believes that in *The Seafarer* the process has been carried so far that the exile of elegy has been identified with the Christian hermit or pilgrim.<sup>1</sup> And it seems a natural enough development, especially in an age when, as Dr. Whitelock has shown, the Christian *peregrinus* was a familiar figure, that the exile theme of secular elegy should acquire something of this new Christian significance. But the difficulty is to determine just what kind of poetic convention it was by which a stylized poetic theme, still apparently secular in character, should be intended to convey a Christian meaning. Mr. Rosteutscher, following Ehrismann,<sup>2</sup> believes that the exile theme in these poems is symbolic, a poetic convention used to signify the suffering man must endure on earth to attain eternal bliss.

The theme becomes somewhat complicated, however, if we are to regard the seafarer as 'real', a Christian *peregrinus*, and his experiences as symbolic. Moreover, there is nothing in the poems themselves to indicate that the exile's lament is intended to be anything but the 'real', or personal, theme—

<sup>1</sup> 'Germanischer Schicksalsglaube und angelsächsische Elegiendichtung', *Englische Studien*, lxxiii (1938), 1-31.

<sup>2</sup> 'Das Gedicht vom Seefahrer', *Beiträge*, xxxv (1909), 213-18.

the *soðgiedd*—it purports to be. And it seems improbable that symbolism would be used at so early a stage of literary development with no explicit exposition of its meaning. In other Anglo-Saxon symbolic poems, *The Phoenix*, *The Whale*, and *The Panther*, the symbolic meaning is carefully expounded.

It seems more in accordance with what we know of early Anglo-Saxon poetry, and of literary origins generally, to accept these poems more simply at their face value, with all their structural weaknesses. We have seen that the first part of these poems consists mainly of the conventional elegiac lament. The fact that elegy at this stage of development has one root in gnomic poetry gives it as a poetic genre a naturally sententious tendency, which in the hands of Christian poets turns ultimately to explicit Christian admonition. But except for this admonition the elegiac pattern is maintained throughout. This pattern lends itself easily to Christian treatment up to a point. It is an easy transition for the wretched, lonely exile to become an *anhaga* who looks for God's mercy, or even to be identified with a Christian *peregrinus*. But the identification is superficial: the figure remains the melancholy exile of secular elegy, bemoaning his lot. It is in the general reflections that we have the real bridge between the secular and the Christian in these poems, for it is here that the old poetic themes natural to secular elegy—the power of fate and the transience of life—receive new impetus from similar themes popular in Christian homily—the omnipotence of God and the mutability of the things of this world.<sup>1</sup> But there is little that is explicitly Christian in these general reflections, and nothing to impair the melancholy mood essential to elegy. Hence the Christian admonitions which come at the end of these poems are in both matter and manner somewhat different from the earlier theme.

It has often been observed that the Christian outlook revealed in these poems is strangely narrow, that God is seen mainly as a terrible Power, and that there is no mention of Christ the Redeemer. And Mr. Rosteutscher attributes this narrowness to an early stage of conversion from heathendom to Christianity. But it would be a strange conversion that did not use in its earliest stages the teachings of the New Testament, and the evidence of the poems themselves indicates a familiarity with homiletic literature that is hardly compatible with ignorance of the most important Christian ideas. Surely it is more probable that the narrowness of the Christian outlook in these poems is dictated by the nature of their poetic purpose. In so far as they are specifically Christian in purpose they are admonitory, and the admonitions, to be relevant, must have some bearing on the earlier theme,

<sup>1</sup> The most notable echoes of Christian homily occur in ll. 92-96 of *The Wanderer* and ll. 80-90 of *The Seafarer*: see N. Kershaw, *Anglo-Saxon and Norse Poems* (Cambridge, 1922), p. 166, and F. Klaeber, *Anglia Beibl.*, xxxviii (1927), 354 f.

which is elegiac. The melancholy mood of elegy and the old poetic themes which belong to it can only be maintained so long as the Christian element is confined to those Christian ideas which are nearest to the older themes. The significance to man of Christ the Redeemer is something alien to this type of poetry. Even the moral that comfort and security are to be found in God's mercy must remain, in a sense, apart from the main theme, in the form of a lesson drawn from it.

We cannot prove that the Christianizing of traditional themes in these poems was not the work of a pious reviser. But the Christian ideas are so deeply embedded in the poems that such revision would have to have been in itself a re-creation. Mr. T. S. Eliot has said: 'Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.'<sup>1</sup> These Christian elegies are mature in the sense that they come at the end of a long tradition of poetry, mainly secular, and it would be surprising if their writers did not steal freely from that tradition what could be used for their newer poetic purposes. It was possibly not theft exactly as Mr. Eliot meant it; for in their use of poetic motives which were part of a common heritage these Christian poets were, perhaps, recording as well as creating. Yet it is doing less than justice to them to suggest, as R. C. Boer and R. Immelmann do,<sup>2</sup> that their work was merely a stringing together of passages from earlier poems. We can only judge this poetry, about which we know so little, by what we have in the text; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If we feel that *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer* are poetic 'creations', then creations they are, no matter how much stolen material we find in them. But some readers have felt that the Christian admonitions must be later additions precisely because they are inferior in poetic quality to the rest. Here, however, we should remember, not only that direct admonition does not lend itself well to poetic treatment, but also that these poets were working in a tight poetic tradition in which the only link with the world of Christian ideas was through the medium of the elegiac themes—the power of fate and the transience of life. It is this world of elegiac thought, not the real Christian world, that supplies the poetic inspiration, and it is the stylized elegiac genre that gives poetic shape to these poems.

<sup>1</sup> Essay on Philip Massinger, *Selected Essays* (London, 1932), p. 206.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, xxxv (1902), 1-28, and *Forschungen zur altenglischen Poesie* (Berlin, 1920).

'GOD GUIDE THEE, GUYON':  
NATURE AND GRACE RECONCILED IN  
*THE FAERIE QUEENE*, BOOK II

By ROBERT HOOPES

THIS paper takes as its point of critical departure Professor A. S. P. Woodhouse's important article, 'Nature and Grace in *The Faerie Queene*',<sup>1</sup> in which the author made use, for purposes of re-examination and reinterpretation of Spenser's poem, of the same intellectual frame of reference which he had brilliantly used eight years earlier in 'The Argument of Milton's *Comus*'.<sup>2</sup> Like Milton, Spenser was shown to have distinguished sharply between the orders of nature and grace, though he was aware of their parallels as well as of their differences, and emphasized both aspects of their relationship in building his epic. After quoting a passage from an anonymous contemporary of Milton, which distinguishes between the purely natural or worldly man, called *microcosmus*, and the believer, called *microchristus*, or 'the epitome of Christ mystical', Professor Woodhouse writes:

I suggest that some such relation between the order of nature and the order of grace is likewise present in Spenser's mind, and some such distinction between the motives and sanctions of virtue on the natural level and on the specifically religious, and that these are consistently applied in the part of the *Faerie Queene* which we possess: or, to be quite concrete, that Book I moves (as has been generally recognized) on the religious level, or (as I should prefer to describe it) with reference to the order of grace, and the remaining books (as has not been recognized) on the natural level only: that the Redcross Knight is indeed *microchristus*, but Guyon, and each of the other heroes of individual books, *microcosmus* alone. (p. 198)

From this initial postulate the rest of the analysis derives. Book I, the book of holiness, moves entirely within the realm of grace; and in so doing stresses not man's nobility or strength, but his impotence, his inability to rise above himself or to improve himself by his own efforts. Its hero, the Redcross Knight, stumbles along his way, is safe only in the presence of Truth, and has to be rescued again and again from his own spectacular failures. In this manner Book I seeks to demonstrate man's utter dependence upon divine grace and thereby outlines an exclusively Christian ideal. In contrast, Book II stresses man's ability to achieve virtue by means of certain capacities inherent in his own nature. From the Palmer Guyon

<sup>1</sup> *E.L.H.*, xvi (1949), 194-228.

<sup>2</sup> *University of Toronto Quarterly*, xi (1941-2), 46-71.

learns the rule of reason over the passions and gradually perfects himself in temperance until, by the end of the book, he is self-sufficient. In emphasizing the potentialities of man's nature, as against Book I, which emphasizes its limitations, Book II may be said to have outlined a classical ideal.

Now Spenser's purpose in all this, according to Professor Woodhouse, is aesthetic contrast and pattern. Although the poet emphasizes the differences between grace and nature, showing on the one hand morally helpless man, utterly dependent upon God, and on the other hand the virtue and perfection which man realizes through his own nature and effort, the two points of view were not incapable of final reconciliation, a reconciliation which, Professor Woodhouse conjectures, Spenser might well have intended for Book XII:

All [theories of interpretation] recognize the necessity of some synthesis between the contentions of the various books, but [some] try to provide for the synthesis piecemeal as the poem moves along, while mine, remembering that we have only the first half of the pattern of the *Faerie Queene*, is content that synthesis should be prepared for, but held in solution, perhaps even till Book XII. (p. 199)

In Book II, then (or in the rest of the epic as we have it), the opposition between Christian and classical ideals is *not* reconciled, such is the implication of Woodhouse's analysis as a whole. As a critical conclusion it has so far gone undisputed. Judah L. Stampfer, following Woodhouse in a recent discussion of the *Cantos of Mutability*, distinguishes as follows between what he regards as the two dominant attitudes toward 'nature' during the Renaissance:

According to one, nature is a depraved order with grace as its miraculous corrective; according to the other, nature is a benevolent order, with grace as the crown of its ascending scale of values.<sup>1</sup>

After which he adds, "These two points of view are never resolved in the *Faerie Queene*' (p. 149). I do not think that these remarks will bear rigorous scrutiny, though my objections to both Woodhouse and Stampfer are rather to what seems to me to be overstatement than to fundamental misstatement. No one will deny the Renaissance acceptance of the two realms of nature and grace, and few articles have been so genuinely helpful to the teaching of Spenser as Professor Woodhouse's. But in emphasizing the contrast between the two orders as they are depicted in Books I and II, I think he has slighted Spenser's very real effort to show their harmony, especially in Book II. For example:

<sup>1</sup> 'The *Cantos of Mutability*: Spenser's Last Testament of Faith', *University of Toronto Quarterly*, xxi (1952), 149.



... while the motivation and sanctions of the Redcross Knight's virtue are specifically religious, those of Guyon's, just as clearly are not. . . . No doubt he [Spenser] interprets the virtues of the natural order as a Christian would interpret them; but he scrupulously abstains from assigning to them a religious motive and from invoking in their behalf the supernatural sanctions so freely drawn upon in Book I; nor does he bespeak in their support any infusion of divine grace. (pp. 198-9, 200)

Despite these categorical assertions, Professor Woodhouse himself notes the presence of the angel which stands guard over the unconscious Guyon at the opening of Canto viii, and calls our attention elsewhere in the same study to at least two episodes which imply that both grace and nature are necessary to the life of man. That is: in Canto viii Arthur, presumably in the role of magnanimity, defeats Cymochles and Pyrochles without supernatural aid of any kind; in Canto xi, however, he is permitted to triumph over Maleger (Original Sin) only through the miraculous intervention and efficacy of divine grace, the waters of baptism symbolized by the lake into which Maleger is hurled. Now *The Faerie Queene*, whatever its attention to classical virtues, takes place after all in a Christian world, and in recognition of this fact Professor Woodhouse proposes Arthur's third role in the epic, as the symbol of the operation of grace *within* nature. Hence, although he comes as magnanimity to save Guyon from Pyrochles, Arthur's intervention is in the strictest sense of the word a *providential* one. These observations help somewhat, but they do not answer all the questions. The episodes from Book II cited above certainly suggest the possibility, at least, that the contrast between Books I and II may not be so absolute as Professor Woodhouse's interpretation makes it out to be. If there are two episodes such as these, perhaps there are more; and if close reading and analysis disclose that there are, what will our interpretation of Spenser's total method and purpose be when we re-examine Book II in their light? In short, Professor Woodhouse's study itself suggests that Spenser regarded both grace and nature as necessary to the life of man, but that in Book II we can only *infer* the fact, since Spenser is not explicit on the matter; he does not show clearly how the two ideals or orders interact. The purpose of this study is to show that there is really more interaction than opposition, that the two ideals are imaginatively, if not philosophically, harmonized within the narrative action and sequence of Book II, and that Spenser tried explicitly to reconcile them. To attempt such a demonstration is not from the outside 'to provide for the synthesis piecemeal'; it is, I hope, to see and set forth the synthesis that is actually there. Sir Guyon's immediate motivation from adventure to adventure may not be specifically religious, as Professor Woodhouse asserts, but the ultimate sanction of what he does and tries to do *is* religious. Spenser did his best—to borrow

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the language of *Comus*—to give 'spare Temperance' its 'holy dictates', and he did his best to make us see them.

Nothing is really more significant in Book II than the initial meeting between Guyon and the Redcross Knight. It is, of course, a commonplace to point out that this incident is Spenser's manner of linking Books I and II, and incidentally of symbolizing the harmony between the revealed truth of Christianity and the highest insights of classical wisdom. Given its important position at the start of the book, however, surely one may reasonably suppose that it serves other and more specific functions. One thing to remember is that Book I was, in a sense, the book of conversion; in it the Redcross Knight was incorporated into the faith. The remaining books, I submit, were intended to record the progress of the soul after conversion, with a different knight as the hero of each book, as Spenser tells us in the letter to Raleigh, 'for the more variety of the history'. At any rate, the significant thing about the meeting at the start of Book II, if I am right, is that before Guyon begins his quest he must recognize his dependence upon God. It is noteworthy that the Palmer, who represents reason, after commending the Redcross Knight for having 'wonne' his 'seat . . . with Saints', laments that 'wretched we . . . Must now anew begin, like race to runne' (II. i. 32). At this point, the Palmer turns to his own companion, saying:

God guide thee, *Guyon*, well to end thy warke,  
And to the wished hauen bring thy weary barke.

We are likely to forget that the Palmer represents Guyon's reason, that he is speaking only as an allegorical figure. This is Guyon speaking to himself, or better, to God. What I am saying, admittedly at the risk of over-literalizing allegory, is that Spenser opens his second book, the book of temperance, with his hero uttering a prayer for God's help. Thus envisaged, Guyon sets out with both supernatural and natural sanction, with the blessing of holiness and the guidance of right reason.

The next important episode for our purpose occurs when Guyon descends to the cave of Mammon. He is alone, the Palmer having been left behind on the shores of the Idle Lake; hence he is without reason. Three days' tour of Mammon's infernal chambers exhausts him, and upon reaching the upper air he is overcome and falls unconscious. But he does not die, for God sends one of his guardian angels to watch over him (a clear indication, as Professor Woodhouse points out, of the operation of God's providence within the natural order). As the Palmer, or reason, returns, Guyon starts to regain consciousness, and at this point the angel departs. Nevertheless, after commending Guyon's 'deare safetie' to the Palmer, he adds:

Yet will I not forgoe, ne yet forget  
 The care thereof my selfe vnto the end,  
 But euermore him succour, and defend  
 Against his foe and mine. (II. viii. 8)

At this point, as at the beginning of the book, religion and reason are in joint charge of the knight of temperance.

In his weakened state, however, Guyon is easily attacked by Pyrochles, or fiery wrath, and Cymochles, or sensuality, who represent the irascible and concupiscible instincts of the irrational part of the soul. Arthur intervenes to save him; a providential intervention, to be sure, but I do not agree with Professor Woodhouse that Arthur has already shifted his role from the representative of heavenly grace to the embodiment of magnanimity. In the first place, Arthur is in no way identified as the representative of magnanimity. Instead, when he appears upon the scene, he greets the Palmer, turns, and sees the lifeless body of Guyon upon the ground, 'In whose dead face he red great magnanimity' (II. viii. 23). It is Guyon, not Arthur, who is identified by the Aristotelian virtue. Secondly, the word *grace* is thrice used in connexion with Prince Arthur during this episode: once to describe him, again to refer to what he has to offer, and finally to confirm his function and significance for the reader after the battle with the pagan knights. Just as Pyrochles and Cymochles are about to strip the unconscious Guyon, Spenser says that they spied the approach of 'An armed knight, of bold and bounteous grace' (II. viii. 17). And even Archimago goads them into battle by calling out, a few lines later,

Yonder comes the prowtest knight aliue,  
 Prince *Arthur* flowre of grace and noblesse. (II. viii. 18)

If these were the only two places in which the word was used, we should be justified in taking them to mean 'grace' solely in the chivalric sense of beauty and dignity of demeanour. Seven stanzas later, however, the Palmer explains to Arthur what has befallen Guyon, what the two villainous knights intend doing, and begs him to 'succour [Guyon's] sad plight' because his 'honourable sight / Doth promise hope of helpe, and timely grace' (II. viii. 25). To this request Arthur replies that perhaps rational dissuasion will suffice to deflect the wrathful pair from their foul intentions; at least 'Words well dispost / Have secret powre, t'appease inflamed rage' (II. viii. 26). If they fail to respond to reason, 'leauē vnto me thy knights last patronage' (ibid.). The two knights, of course, will have nothing to do with rational dissuasion; and for a while, as so frequently happens in *The Faerie Queene*, the claims of theological and moral allegory yield to the claims of romance as Spenser allows the battle to see-saw in familiar fashion until right finally triumphs (even though, as I am claiming, Arthur here



represents grace, and it may seem a little odd that divine grace should be so put to it in a fight against two snivelling libertines like Cymochles and Pyrochles).<sup>1</sup> Cymochles is slain in the fight, but Pyrochles is not, having cast away the magic sword that will not harm its true owner. At this point Arthur, as perfect Christian knight and gentleman, offers to spare the pagan knight if he will repent and become Arthur's follower:

But full of Princely bounty and great mind,  
The Conquerour nocht cared him to slay,  
But casting wrongs and all reuenge behind,  
More glory thought to giue life, then decay,  
And said, Paynim, this is thy dismall day;  
Yet if thou wilt renounce thy miscreaunce,  
And my trew liegeman yield thy selfe for ay,  
Life will I graunt thee for thy valiaunce,  
And all thy wrongs will wipe out of my souenaunce. (II. viii. 51)

The offer may, of course, be interpreted simply as a chivalric refusal to strike an opponent when he is down, but the situation certainly suggests the Catholic and Anglican doctrine of repentance. Pyrochles is here in the position of a sinner being offered a chance of salvation, provided he genuinely renounce his past misdeeds and freely embrace faith in God. He refuses to do so, thereby damning himself as a lost soul:

Foole (said the Pagan) I thy gift defye,  
But vse thy fortune, as it doth befall,  
And say, that I not ouercome do dye,  
But in despite of life, for death do call. (II. viii. 52)

The lines which immediately follow these are, I think, conclusive:

Wroth was the Prince, and sory yet withall,  
That he so wilfully refused grace.

The interpretation which I have offered thus far may seem to run counter to, or even to ignore, the fuller analysis of Book II recently presented by Professor Ernest Sirluck.<sup>2</sup> I have not ignored it, and I do not think that what I have said conflicts with, so much as (I hope) it supplements, his view. His fundamental point with respect to Guyon, namely that in certain episodes he represents Aristotelian temperance, and in others Aristotelian

<sup>1</sup> My own feeling is that with these two characters Spenser simply failed to do what he tried to do. Arthur's encounter with them occurs at the same point in Book II as his battle with Orgoglio in Book I, and the rescue of the hero in each instance seems designed to represent a dramatic and climactic step in the development of the total moral allegory. In Book I we grasp that fact artistically, in great part because Orgoglio's dimensions are what they are. Like God and Satan in *Paradise Lost*, Arthur and the evil giant are fit antagonists for one another. In Book II, when all is said and done, the champion of the world seems forced into a street brawl with a couple of juvenile delinquents.

<sup>2</sup> 'The *Faerie Queene*, Book II, and the *Nicomachean Ethics*', *M.P.*, xlix (1951), 73-100.

continence, is, I think, generally sound. When the Palmer is present, Guyon would seem to represent continence, as in the encounter with Furor, for he requires the active presence, guidance, and restraint of reason over the strong appetites and passions which the continent man feels. When the Palmer is absent, Guyon represents temperance, as in the Mammon episode, for, as Professor Sirluck points out, 'he has no such need; he does not feel the strong desires which the continent man bridles by means of his reason; he is, instead, the temperate man who feels desire only for the right things' (p. 86). According to this view it is wrong to speak of Guyon's 'struggle' in the Cave of Mammon; there is no struggle, and he is, in keeping with the concept of virtue as *habitus*, invulnerable to temptation. Professor Sirluck might have added that Spenser himself gives us the clue for this generally convincing view of Guyon in Canto viii, for in the second stanza of Canto vii we find that 'Guyon hauing lost his trusty guide' continues on his way,

of none accompanide;  
And euermore himselfe with comfort feedes,  
Of his owne vertues, and prayse-worthy deedes.

But even if this interpretation be accepted as true, one is forced to ask why Guyon, presumably self-sufficient in the absence of the Palmer, is exhausted at the end of his encounter with Mammon. He may be only 'physically' exhausted, as Professor Sirluck claims,<sup>1</sup> but he is nevertheless exhausted; and surely Sirluck spoke rashly in saying that Guyon's separation from the Palmer 'is without ethical significance'.<sup>2</sup> Spenser's allegory will not release us so easily: when Guyon is separated from the Palmer, he is bereft of reason, and however fortified he may have been by the *habitus* of temperance, he *might* have perished, had it not been for God's love. Otherwise why did the poet feel compelled to introduce the guardian angel where he did? I submit that Spenser is showing, as he will show in another fashion later, the limits of nature. There may be such a thing as the continent man and there may be such a thing as the temperate man, but there is no such thing as a completely self-sufficient man, whether continent or temperate. This fact, I think, is confirmed first of all by the meeting of the Redcross Knight and Guyon at the opening of Book II; second, by the Palmer's return at the beginning of Canto viii; third, by Arthur's intervention and the fact that Guyon does not become fully conscious until after Pyrochles and Cymochles have been defeated, suggesting that reason has not fully returned until grace has been accepted. In short, I interpret the whole sequence of episodes to mean that *it is itself reasonable for man to recognize his dependence upon God*. But Spenser is not bludgeoning the

<sup>1</sup> 'Milton Revises *The Faerie Queene*', *M.P.*, xlviii (1950), 92.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

point, as I am; he simply assumes it, and in so doing he accommodates his delineation of Aristotelian virtue to a Christian world, which regards human virtues as themselves gifts of God.

Now, and now only, can Guyon go to the Castle of Alma, and it is fitting that Arthur accompany him. Spenser has worked things out to this point to show that religion is an indispensable element of the virtuous man. Indeed, in a Christian world, the virtues alone and without supernatural sanction are illusions. Spenser does not deny the necessity and usefulness of the classical virtues,<sup>1</sup> but he cannot assert their sufficiency. Book II of *The Faerie Queene* may be man-centred, as against Book I, which is God-centred, but the virtues which Book II outlines are not self-authenticating, and the hero of the book is neither self-sufficient nor perfectible by his own efforts. The opening stanza of Canto ix (which looks back as well as forward, as Spenser's opening stanzas almost always do), emphasizes man's 'native dignity and grace' as well as his perilous position: man is responsible for preserving himself, lest 'through misrule and passions bace' his nature 'growes a Monster'. But Spenser did not expect us to read Book II (or any other book, for that matter) in isolation, and we are reminded in the opening line of the stanza that man is first of all 'Gods work':

Of all Gods workes, which do this world adorne,  
There is no one more faire and excellent,  
Than is mans body both for powre and forme,  
Whiles it is kept in sober gouernment.

In Book II as a whole we are never very long without such reminders.

<sup>1</sup> He would have agreed with Hooker that although 'nature hath need of grace', it is equally true 'that grace hath use of nature'. *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, III. viii. 6. Early in his article Professor Woodhouse quotes the passage (to which I have already referred) distinguishing between man as *microcosmos* and man as *microchristus* from an anonymous work entitled *The Ancient Bounds* (London, 1645), as an example of the view of the relation between nature and grace present in Spenser's mind. As another and earlier example, more relevant, I think, to Book II in particular, I offer the following passage in defence of the author's argument, from George Wither's preface to his translation of Bishop Nemesius's treatise on *The Nature of Man* (London, 1636)—a statement that might well serve as a prefatory 'Argument' to Book II of *The Faerie Queene*: 'Let no man, therefore, despise this meanes of *Instruction*, nor prejudicately conceive (because it may have some expressions unsutable to their opinions) that NATURE is here magnified above GRACE, or in any measure equalled thereunto: or, that any power is thereto ascribed, derogating from the *free mercy* of God. . . . There is not . . . one syllable in this *Tract*, which tendeth not to the glorifying of GOD's *Grace* to *Mankind*. For, whatsoever is ascribed to *man*, as being primarily in him by *nature*, is acknowledged to be the gracious gift of GOD: That which is affirmed to be left in him, since the *fall*, is confessed to have been justly forfeited, and yet preserved in him, by the *free Grace* of the same GOD: The good *effects* of all those *Faculties*, which are affirmed in *mans* power, were not (in my understanding) so much as thought, by this *Author*, (nor are they so conceived by me) to be wrought at any time without the continuall assistance of the *holy Spirit*: neither is the *naturall power* of *man*, or the excellency of his *nature*, here set forth for *mans* owne glory, or that he should arrogate anything to himself.' (Sig. A5v-A6.)

If one were asked to ascribe more precise theological meanings to the figures and events which I have been discussing, it might be argued that the presence of the Redcross Knight at the start of Book II suggests the concept of prevenient or antecedent grace, that is, grace which inclines the will to choose the good. Thereafter, we are given occasional examples, in the person of Arthur, of subsequent or co-operating grace, which assists man to act after the will has already been inclined to choose the good.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Arthur's encounter with Maleger in the eleventh canto is not a new departure, nor is it opposed to earlier events in Book II, as Professor Woodhouse seems to imply. This episode actually completes the meaning of the sequence of events as Spenser has worked it out to this point. Arthur, as magnanimity, cannot overcome Maleger, who represents original sin. Only the waters of baptism will suffice:

So greatest and most glorious thing on ground  
May often need the helpe of weaker hand;  
So feeble is mans state, and life vnsound,  
That in assurance it may neuer stand,  
Till it dissolued be from earthly band.  
Proofe be thou Prince, the prowest man aliue,  
And noblest borne of all in *Britayne* land;  
Yet thee fierce Fortune did so nearely drue,  
That had not grace thee blest, thou shouldest not surviue. (II. xi. 30)

Arthur has clearly changed function, though after repeated and careful readings I am unable to identify a specific place at which Spenser announces or otherwise makes clear the transition. Whereas Arthur had offered grace to Pyrochles, it is now Arthur himself whom grace has blest. Baptismal deliverance must precede temperance: Arthur must do what he does, Maleger (original sin) must be shown to have been put down before Guyon can do what he does, even though his destruction of Acrasia's bower may, after Arthur's great scene, seem anti-climactic to those who forget the religious basis of Spenser's thought. However artistically unsatisfying, this is the reason why Spenser felt the necessity of the double resolution of the book in the twin victorious exploits of Arthur and Guyon. It also seems to me sufficient proof that Cantos xi and xii were not composed as alternate endings to Book II, as some scholars have suggested, that Spenser specifically intended them to appear in the order in which we have them. The effects of original sin must be overcome before Guyon, the temperate man, can go on and destroy intemperance. To be sure, Acrasia is only bound, not exterminated; but that is simply Christian common sense. At least it is good Anglican and Catholic common sense, and Professor Whitaker has

<sup>1</sup> See Articles of Religion, No. X; and Edgar C. S. Gibson, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*, 2nd ed. (London, 1898), pp. 378-87.

shown beyond a doubt that Spenser did not accept the extreme Calvinistic doctrine of perseverance in grace.<sup>1</sup> Guyon may have achieved greatness through virtue and self-mastery; he may even have been infused with and protected by divine grace; but his greatness, like that of any Christian, remains limited by the Fall. Spenser would regard as preposterous the assumption that the desires and appetites can be completely eliminated from fallen human nature. This is why Guyon can at best represent only continence in the Bower of Bliss, the climactic episode in the book. However successfully some men may learn to control their passions, the result of the Fall is that irrational and unnatural impulses always remain with us.<sup>2</sup> Hence the necessity for reason to be ever on guard and the necessity for the Palmer's presence in the last canto. Even so, one may observe that Guyon, a Christian, does *destroy* Acrasia's garden, which is more than his pre-Christian predecessors, Odysseus and Aeneas, were able to do: they managed only their own getaways.

We are helped to a fuller understanding of Spenser's total meaning if we look ahead for a moment to the scale of values outlined in Milton's *Comus*. The distinguishing feature of that scale, as Professor Woodhouse has pointed out, is not renunciation, but 'comprehension and ascent',<sup>3</sup> and Milton does all he can to keep his argument from seeming austere and repressive. It will be recalled that Comus and the Lady fight to a draw in their central debate until she adds religion to her argument. Her bleak Stoic defence of chastity might alone be construed as pride or mere revulsion from her would-be seducer. A religious sanction for chastity is invoked precisely in order that chastity may become positive, not negative; in order that the Lady's rejection of Comus's argument may not seem mere Stoicism or neurotic revulsion. Sensuality is rejected, but not natural pleasure, which is subordinated to certain higher values in an ascending scale, a scale in which physical pleasure has its place, but is not the end. The Lady's

<sup>1</sup> Virgil K. Whitaker, *The Religious Basis of Spenser's Thought* (Stanford, California, 1950), pp. 45-46. See also, by the same author, 'The Theological Structure of the *Faerie Queene*, Book I', *E.L.H.*, xix (1952), 151-64. Had it not been for these two studies, the second of which I was privileged to read in manuscript, this article could hardly have been written. Professor Woodhouse indicates his acceptance of the profound influence of Calvin upon Spenser's religious thought by his reference to the work of F. M. Padelford (p. 196, n. 4). My own conviction is that, whatever Spenser's sympathies toward institutional reform and the rooting out of clerical abuse and corruption, he remained theologically high church throughout his life. The Thirty-Nine Articles, with all their ambiguity and fence-sitting, invariably accommodate Spenser's religious ideas (as accurately as we can distil those ideas from their poetic and dramatic contexts) more easily than the rigorous and uncompromising dogmas of Calvin's *Institutes*.

<sup>2</sup> It is almost superfluous to point out that if Spenser had not believed this, *The Faerie Queene* would have concluded with the sanctification of the Redcross Knight at the end of Book I. See Articles of Religion, No. IX ('Of Original or Birth-sin'): 'And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated . . .'

<sup>3</sup> 'The Argument of Milton's *Comus*', p. 61.



rational objections to intemperance, accordingly, derive their confirmation and real authority from the second part of her speech, wherein the 'Sun-clad power of Chastity' is religiously celebrated. The intellectual pattern of Book II of *The Faerie Queene* is analogous in that Spenser does his best to conduct the action in such a way that Guyon's final destruction of the Bower of Bliss will not seem prudish. And we have to analyse the action of the book closely in order to detect his efforts, remembering that we do not share the assumptions and beliefs about the theocentric universe of Spenser's contemporaries, that men will never again respond instinctively to his world-picture, but that a knowledge of that world-picture is essential to any proper understanding of his poem. If Spenser does not succeed, that is because human beings are what they are; in the twentieth century, to quote from a recent popular song, 'Doin' what comes naturally' no longer means living in accordance with the Law of Nature.

Finally, if *Comus* seems remote as an analogy, or at best appropriate rather to Book III than to Book II of Spenser's poem, surely *Paradise Regained* is as valid and striking an analogy as we shall find. Like Guyon, the hero of Milton's short epic is the Aristotelian magnanimous man transmuted and raised to a Christian level.<sup>1</sup> Christ meets Satan's temptations with what appear to be merely human resources, but as Milton makes clear throughout, the most important of these is faith in God.<sup>2</sup> Reason establishes temperance, which enables Christ to refuse Satan; but it is faith in God, the 'Light from above', that guarantees reason. And when matters are brought to their final issue in Christ's repudiation of the ancients and of all their works, which are the products of natural reason unenlightened by grace, we are shown which has priority. Spenser's hero is not Christ, nor does he give us the final object-lesson found in *Paradise Regained*, but with Sir Guyon and Prince Arthur he is, as I have tried to show, engaged in precisely the same work of transmutation and elevation. Guyon's reason is not its own authority; it is itself a gift of God. Not only in the background of Book II, but in the foreground, in the action itself, Spenser has done his best to show us that there is something which nourishes and guarantees reason, something which supplies the credentials by which reason operates, something which, to borrow Étienne Gilson's words, makes for a specifically 'Christian exercise of reason'.<sup>3</sup> It is the grace of God.

<sup>1</sup> See Merritt Y. Hughes, 'The Christ of *Paradise Regained* and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition', *S.P.*, xxxv (1938), 254-77.

<sup>2</sup> See Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1945), p. 391.

<sup>3</sup> *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, tr. A. H. C. Downes (New York, 1940), p. 12.

## MILTON'S 'TWO-HANDED ENGINE AT THE DOOR' AND ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

By HARRY F. ROBINS

IN what seems to me the most vigorously argued of several recent articles on *Lycidas*, 130-1, Edward S. Le Comte urges that the enigma of Milton's 'two-handed engine' be approached with one fact and one principle in mind. 'The fact is that the verse paragraph which ends with these lines is based on the parable in John x. And the principle is to ask ourselves what the contemporary reader could have been expected to make of the lines when he came upon them in this context.'<sup>1</sup> With Le Comte's principle I thoroughly agree. With his fact, however, I must take issue; for, as I propose to show, the book of Matthew throws far more light on Milton's meaning than the parable of the good shepherd in John x.

Professor Le Comte has ably revealed the weaknesses in an impressive number of the solutions which the famous crux has inspired.<sup>2</sup> I should like here briefly to examine his own interpretation. He argues as follows: 'The bad clergy have, by unhallowed means, got into the church, but for them a dreadful fate is at the door.' Le Comte equates Milton's 'door' with the door to the Christian Church, which in turn he identifies as the 'fold' in *Lycidas*, 115. Further, he contends that the 'fold' should be thought of as an actual building with an actual door, capable of being shattered into 'architectural collapse' when the evil bishops and their followers are visited with the 'dual and simultaneous fate' of 'death and damnation'. This punishment, which comes upon them in the midst of life coincident with the destruction of the Church, is to be effected, as Le Comte sees it, by a 'battery engine' in the form of a two-handed or particularly weighty, powerful sword wielded either by the Father or the Son—such a sword as that which figures in the sermons of Savonarola. Those who are persuaded that Le Comte's thesis is sound may well concede the possibility that Milton had Savonarola's sword of God in mind, though it seems unlikely that the poet would have expected his contemporary

<sup>1</sup> Edward S. Le Comte, "'That Two-Handed Engine' and Savonarola", *S.P.*, xlvii (1950), 589.

<sup>2</sup> For a thorough review of solutions to the problem prior to 1930 and an analysis of their faults, see also Donald C. Dorian, 'Milton's "Two-Handed Engine"', *P.M.L.A.*, xlv (1930), 204-15. The reader interested in a compendium of the arguments and conjectures which the couplet has called forth is referred to the studies of Dorian and Le Comte and to Le Comte's supplementary remarks in *S.P.*, xlix (1952), 548-50. I have made no attempt in this paper to recapitulate that which they have so well covered.

readers to be enlightened by so obscure a parallel.<sup>1</sup> Without attempting to deal with Le Comte's argument as a whole, I wish to object to several of its implications. First, the wholesale destruction of the Church would have included in its wake not only those unfit for spiritual responsibility but also the blameless and admirable clergy in whose number Lycidas himself, had he lived, would have been found. Moreover, such destruction would have doomed the misled congregations. Was Milton so sanguinary as to hope for the downfall of all the hungry sheep in England who, 'swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw, Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread', or did he rather wish in the spirit of the parable upon which Le Comte rests his case that these unfortunates might yet be saved? 'And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd' (John x. 16). Second, in terms of John x, whatever retribution is designed for the false clergy, it is not to be dealt at the church door. For, though the parable contains no direct reference to the punishment which the evil shepherds are to undergo, it is surely safe to assume that their fate will be the opposite of the reward in store for the good shepherds, to whom Christ promises eternal life (John x. 28). Obviously, then, the bad shepherds are to be punished by being *deprived* of eternal life. But both punishment and reward are postponed until life on earth is finished. Third, when Christ interprets his parable for the Pharisees, he says, 'I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved . . .' (John x. 9). In the parable the door is Christ; the door is the way of life advocated by Christ; the door is the entry into eternal salvation. These connotations, I believe, may also be legitimately assigned to 'the door' in *Lycidas*, provided that we do not lose sight of their purely metaphorical significance.

My solution to the problem depends primarily upon an intensive semantic examination of the couplet which contains the crux:

But that two-handed engine at the door,  
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.<sup>2</sup>

First to be considered are the possible meanings of the word 'But'. There are two. The more unlikely of these is quite properly set aside by Le Comte.

We need not pause long over those interpretations which take Milton's 'But' as adversative only to the preceding words, 'and nothing said', rendering the engine 'a further item in the list of evils under prelacy, not a sign of punishment to the wrongdoers' (see D. H. Stevens, *Reference Guide to Milton*, Chicago, 1930, p. 62). . . . The headnote of 1645 and 1673 disposes of this heterodoxy: 'In this

<sup>1</sup> It is hardly necessary to remark that once an interpretation has been determined upon, the source-hunter may be confident of discovering analogues somewhere within Milton's own writings or else within the vast corpus of literature which the poet is known to have read.

<sup>2</sup> All quotations from *Lycidas* are from the 1645 edition.



Monody the Author . . . by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.' These words must refer to this couplet, since there is nothing else in the poem to which they can refer.<sup>1</sup>

The logical inference is that the word 'But' exerts an adversative force over the whole of St. Peter's denunciation of the wicked clergy. The vast majority of commentators on *Lycidas* accept this second meaning. It is upheld by the headnote of the two last editions of the poem printed in Milton's lifetime. Thus St. Peter's speech may shortly be paraphrased: 'The self-seeking clergy have been responsible for many ills, *but* their doom awaits them.'

The demonstrative 'that' in the first line of the couplet may be construed in three ways. It may have reference to something preceding it in the verse paragraph which the couplet concludes. Such an idea has been persistently championed by C. W. Brodribb, who hit upon the 'Sheep-hook' in line 120 as the antecedent.<sup>2</sup> More recently W. Arthur Turner has suggested that the 'two-handed engine' is the lock (or the power of the lock) on St. Peter's door.<sup>3</sup> Le Comte brings up but makes light of the possibility that the engine is the keys of St. Peter.<sup>4</sup> The fact is that one soon exhausts the number of even remotely conceivable antecedents in the paragraph. None of these answers can be accepted as inevitable; indeed, they are chiefly remarkable for their ingeniousness. Furthermore, none appears capable of raising in the mind a vision of combined power and dread such as that evoked by the enigmatic 'two-handed engine' which 'Stands ready to smite once and smite no more'. A second explanation is that Milton deliberately obscured his meaning, either out of caution or out of a desire to add to the terror of the figure. But it is doubtful if the couplet appreciably increases the offence which the whole passage might have given to Church and State; and the very concreteness of the poet's language indicates that mystery was not his aim.<sup>5</sup> Had Milton wished to be dark, why the headnote to the 1645 edition, which so obviously applies to these two lines and to no others? If we rule out the possibility that an antecedent for Milton's 'that' precedes it in the verse paragraph, on the ground that no really satisfactory antecedent can be found; and if we rule out the theory that Milton was being intentionally cryptic, on the ground that the headnote shows his anxiety to be understood, then a third construction, and the only probable one,

<sup>1</sup> Le Comte, p. 592 n.

<sup>2</sup> C. W. Brodribb, "'That Two-Handed Engine at the Door'", *T.L.S.*, 6 Dec. 1928, p. 965. See also *T.L.S.*, 5 June 1943, p. 271. For an answer to Brodribb, see Marian H. Studley, "'That Two-Handed Engine'", *C.E.*, xxvi (1937), 148-51.

<sup>3</sup> W. Arthur Turner, 'Milton's Two-Handed Engine', *J.E.G.P.*, xlix (1950), 562-5.

<sup>4</sup> Le Comte, p. 590.

<sup>5</sup> Consider the deliberate vagueness which characterizes Milton's description of Death, *Paradise Lost*, II. 666-73.

must be placed upon the pronoun: that Milton intended to imply, and to imply without obscurity, an antecedent unexpressed but so widely known, so readily identifiable, and so generally agreed upon as to be immediately recognized. Yet the plethora of explanations offered for the crux plainly indicates the existence of some obstacle to immediate recognition of the poet's meaning. The difficulty, I am convinced, hinges upon our understanding of the word 'engine'.

This word is admittedly ambiguous. Accordingly, Milton's commentators have split into two groups, the first taking 'engine' to signify 'a weapon of war or destruction' with or without a dual function (governed, of course, by the qualifying 'two-handed'), and the second group allowing the word a figurative sense based upon the idea of dual function alone. To the first group belong the adherents of the swords of God, Christ, Michael, the Scots, Romance, Huanebango, the headsman, and the two-edged sword which went out of the mouth of 'one like unto the Son of man' in Revelation.<sup>1</sup> Also in this first group are the advocates of the sheep-hook, the scythes of Death and Time, the axe, the headsman's axe, the battle-axe, the Biblical or Miltonic axe that is laid to the root of the tree, the battle maul, the iron flail of Talus, and the iron rod and sceptre of God's wrath. The second group, those who arrive at a purely figurative meaning for 'engine' by concentrating upon the adjective 'two-handed', includes the proponents of the two houses of Parliament, the two nations of England and Scotland, the Catholic threat of Spain and France, the doors of the Temple of Janus, the Old and New Testaments, spiritual and temporal power, and Man as labourer and worshipper. All of these solutions, some more credible than others, suffer from an air of having been adroitly grafted upon the text; and it is hard to think of any one of them as the certain choice of the poem's original readers. The consistently popular sword, it should be remembered, has been placed in the hands of Christ, God, Michael, the Scots, Romance, Huanebango, the headsman, and the figure of the vision in Revelation. The very association of such numbers of agents with the sword—and my list is not complete—weakens the case for it as the one unavoidable interpretation. But the stumbling-block inherent in any attempt to identify weapon and wielder is that Milton makes wielder and weapon one—a two-handed engine which stands ready to smite once and for ever.

One connotation of 'engine', as far as I have been able to ascertain, has not been previously explored in connexion with Milton's use of the word in *Lycidas*. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the following:

<sup>1</sup> For a recent defence of the theory that the engine is the two-edged sword of Rev. i. 16, see Leon Howard, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, xv. 173-84. Professor Howard argues that the engine should be equated with 'the Word of God as it was regularly symbolized by the Biblical sword, and that the threat is the threat of the Protestant reformation as it was being continued in the Puritan movement of which Milton was a part'.

10. *fig.* . . . a. Of a person: An agent, instrument, tool.

*Obs.*

1568 GRAFTON *Chron.* II. 610 He was . . . the very organ, engine, and deviser of the destruction of Humfrey the good Duke of Gloucester. 1672 MARVELL *Reh. Transp.* I. 92. That Politick Engine who . . . was employed . . . as a Missionary amongst the Nonconformists. 1713 STEELE *Englishm.* No. 54. 344 Sir Francis Walsingham . . . was one of the great Engines of State. 1767 BLACKSTONE *Comm.* II. 69 Empson and Dudley, the wicked engines of Henry VII.<sup>1</sup>

In the light of this information, I propose that the elemental sense of 'two-handed engine' is an engine with two hands—a man. So transparent is this rendition of the phrase that Milton's commentators seem not to have noticed it in their search for a deeper significance—that is, for the nature of the engine's dual function. My search for this deeper significance begins with the premiss that the duality implied by 'two-handed' is inextricably linked with the adjective's basic meaning; this is, I believe, 'having two hands which characteristically perform disparate offices'. There is nothing uncommon, certainly, about the use of two-handedness to express contraries—e.g. on the one hand, on the other hand.<sup>2</sup> The most familiar example in Milton's writings is undoubtedly this passage from *The Reason of Church Government Urg'd Against Prelaty*: 'Lastly, I should not chuse this manner of writing wherein knowing my self inferior to my self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand.'<sup>3</sup> Thus does Milton, poet with his right hand, pamphleteer with his left, stress the dichotomy in his literary work. In *Eikonoklastes* Milton disparages kings as 'they who ever have accustom'd from the Cradle to use thir will onely as thir right hand, thir reason alwayes as thir left'.<sup>4</sup>

How is the problem in *Lycidas* illuminated by this conception of the import of 'two-handed'? It is often overlooked that in the verse paragraph Milton is concerned with two discrete classes of shepherds—with the good as well as with the bad. St. Peter is introduced as the archetype of the good shepherd. He bears two keys, one of which promises to reward the virtuous, among whom is Lycidas. The 'worthy bidden guest' is shoved away from the shearers' feast by the unworthy shepherds, who have learned nothing

<sup>1</sup> My friend Professor Gwynne B. Evans has called my attention to a similar use of 'engine' by Donne: 'But another instrument and engine of thine [i.e. God's], whom thou hadst so enabled, that nothing was too minerall nor centrick for the search and reach of his wit, hath remembered me; That it is an article of our Belief, that the world began' (*Essays in Divinity*, bound and separately paged with *Paradoxes, Problemes, Essays, Characters* (London, 1652), pp. 27–28).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. 'But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth' (Matt. vi. 3): 'A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left' (Eccles. x. 2).

<sup>3</sup> *Works*, Columbia Edition, iii (part 1), 235.

<sup>4</sup> *Works*, v. 63.

'That to the faithfull Herdmans art belongs'. I submit that it is the peculiar role of the 'two-handed engine' to reward the good and to punish, or smite, the evil clergy.

In seeking to strengthen his position that the engine is a two-handed sword, Professor Le Comte points to Biblical precedent for regarding the word 'smite' as synonymous with 'strike with a weapon'.<sup>1</sup> But in the Bible the verb much more commonly has the figurative sense of 'bring disaster to'. Thus the Lord threatens to smite the Egyptians with frogs (Exod. viii. 2) and the Israelites with pestilence (Num. xiv. 12). Again, Moses prophesies that 'The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew . . .' (Deut. xxviii. 22). Anyone provided with a concordance to the Authorized Version can multiply these examples.

Of all expressions in the crux, the phrase 'at the door' seems to me the least susceptible of finite explanation. If Milton intended to suggest a particular door, then the passage at any rate should offer a hint of its identity. There is, of course, no explicit mention of a door prior to line 130. The presence of St. Peter with his keys may bring to mind the gate of Heaven; and, were it not that he speaks the couplet, some justification could be found for interpreting 'That two-handed engine at the door' as St. Peter himself. But his demonstrative 'that' makes such a conjecture difficult to defend. The only other clue to the possible existence in Milton's mind of a specific door lies in the word 'fold', which occurs both in John x and in *Lycidas*, line 115. By considering 'fold' as the equivalent of 'pen', one may suppose with Professor Le Comte that Milton was thinking of the Church as a building and of the 'door' in line 130 as the actual door of that building. This line of reasoning, however, strikes me as dangerously literal. For the word 'fold' as used in *Lycidas* and in the parable connotes 'flock' as well as 'pen'; and it is not wise to lose sight of either meaning. Moreover, the linkage of the 'door' either with Heaven's gate or with the 'fold' is wholly arbitrary, and any such association must ultimately be tested by its suitability to the explanation of which it is a part. My conviction is that Milton did not intend to particularize a door. Rather, I believe, he employed the phrase 'at the door' to confirm the reader's identification of the preceding 'that two-handed engine'.

Disregarding 'at the door' for the moment, I shall now sum up what I believe to be the most logical rendering of the couplet; and I shall do so by means of this paraphrase: 'But that universally known agent or instrument, who with one hand rewards the good and with the other punishes the evil, stands ready to bring disaster to the evil once and for ever.' Surely this paraphrase directs us to these well-known verses in Matt. xxv:

<sup>1</sup> Le Comte, p. 593.

31. When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:

33. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

44. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst . . . and did not minister unto thee?

45. Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

The line of argument which I have followed in this study leads to the conclusion that Milton's 'two-handed engine' is the Son as God's instrument of judgement. It may be objected that to regard the Second Person of the Trinity as an engine, that is, as an instrument or agent, would be indecorous, even blasphemous. We can say with certainty, however, that Milton had exactly this idea of the relationship between the Son and the Father when he wrote *The Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost*. Perhaps the best illustration from *The Christian Doctrine* is this:

... when it is said 'all things were made by him [the Son]', it must be understood of a secondary and delegated power; and that when the particle 'by' is used in reference to the Father, it denotes the primary cause . . . ; when in reference to the Son, the secondary and instrumental cause. . . .<sup>1</sup>

*Paradise Lost* offers the following example, among many others:

Thee next they sang of all Creation first,  
 Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,  
 In whose conspicuous count'nance, without cloud  
 Made visible, th' Almighty Father shines,  
 Whom else no Creature can behold; on thee  
 Imprest the effulgence of his Glorie abides,  
 Transfus'd on thee his ample Spirit rests.  
*Hee Heav'n of Heavens and all the Powers therein*  
*By thee created, and by thee threw down*  
*Th' aspiring Dominations: thou that day*  
*Thy Fathers dreadful Thunder didst not spare. . . .*  
 (P.L., III. 383-91. Italics mine.)

<sup>1</sup> *Works*, xiv. 205.



We need only turn to the ultimate source of both *The Christian Doctrine* and *Paradise Lost*, if we wish to find authority for Milton's conception of the Son as the engine of God. Christ proclaims it: 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father . . .' (Matt. xi. 27). At the Last Judgement the Son will act for his Father. 'I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me' (John v. 30). Christ is judge; he sees that the law is carried out. His function is one over which he has no control, for he is the grand and perfect instrument of God's eternal and foreordained law. It is not the Son who wills punishment or reward. Every man has a choice, and they who have sown the wind shall reap the whirlwind.

It is to Christ that the phrase 'at the door' unequivocally points. The twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew contains this description of the events which will precede the second advent of Christ:

29. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened; and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

33. So . . . when ye shall see all these things, know that it [margin: Or, *he.*] is near, even at the doors.

In almost identical language the same prophecy appears in Mark xiii. 24-29. The phrase 'at the doors' is thus in both books intimately linked with Christ; in both it carries the connotation of immediacy.<sup>1</sup> Within four years of the composition of *Lycidas*, Milton uses the phrase in this very connexion:

. . . the power of thy grace is not past away with the primitive times, as fond

<sup>1</sup> A. W. Verity, citing Matt. xxiv. 33, gives 'ready at hand' as the meaning of 'at the door'. Professor Le Comte would rule out this translation on the ground that, taken with Milton's 'stands ready', it involves a degree of pleonasm. The redundancy is merely verbal, however; for Verity quite obviously intended his phrase to connote 'in the immediate future'. This is the only possible meaning for the Biblical 'at the doors', considered in context. In his 1898 edition of *Comus and Lycidas*, Verity, in connexion with the passage, quotes Milton: 'thy kingdom is now at hand, and thou standing at the door' (*Remonstrant's Defense*). The phrase 'at hand' is commonly used in the Bible to indicate the imminence of the Last Judgement. *Vide* Isa. xlii. 6; Joel ii. 1; Matt. iii. 2; Mark i. 5; Luke xxi. 31; 2 Thess. ii. 2; Philippians iv. 5; 1 Pet. iv. 7; Rev. i. 3, &c.

There is a distinct difference between 'immediacy' and 'readiness to strike'. A soldier 'stands ready' to defend his country whether or not war is expected 'in the immediate future'.

and faithless men imagine, *but thy Kingdome is now at hand, and thou standing at the dore*. Come forth out of thy Royall Chambers, O Prince of all the Kings of the earth, put on the visible robes of thy imperial Majesty, take up that unlimited Scepter which thy Almighty Father hath bequeath'd thee; for now the voice of thy Bride calls thee, and all creatures sigh to bee renew'd.<sup>1</sup>

It will be noted that here, as in *Lycidas*, Milton writes the singular form 'door' rather than the plural of the Authorized Version. Though I believe that the best translation for 'at the door' is 'in the immediate future', it seems probable that the parable of John x, as well as the passage from Matthew last quoted, influenced Milton's choice of the phrase. As I have already remarked, the connotations derived from Christ's 'I am the door' may be assigned to the 'door' in *Lycidas*, which can be taken then, though not literally, as the door to heaven. That is to say, Christ in his capacity as judge at the Second Coming provides the means by which the elect may reach eternal life. In any event, Milton's 'at the door' should direct the reader familiar with the Bible to the Son of God.

The verse paragraph in *Lycidas* concluded by the troublesome couplet owes far more to the book of Matthew than I have thus far shown. Its influence is observable both in the ideas and in the language of the poetic passage.

In Matthew, and also in Mark, Peter is advised to become a fisher of men (a leader of men in the way of Christ). This is as close as the Bible comes to Milton's 'Pilot'. In Matthew alone are the keys to the kingdom of Heaven given to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19).

The corrupt clergy in *Lycidas* have their parallel in Matthew in the scribes and the Pharisees against whom Christ repeatedly inveighs. These, though firmly established in authority, are not proper examples to those whom they profess to teach. ' . . . The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not' (Matt. xxiii. 2-3). St. Peter begins his speech by denouncing those who follow the Church 'for their bellies sake'. The scribes and the Pharisees 'love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues' (Matt. xxiii. 6).

St. Peter continues his indictment of the wicked shepherds:

Of other care they little reck'ning make,  
Then how to scramble at the shearers feast,<sup>2</sup>  
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.

<sup>1</sup> *Works, Animadversions*, iii (part 1), 148. Italics mine.

<sup>2</sup> A verbal analogue for Milton's 'shearers feast' occurs in 1 Sam. xxv, which recounts the story of Nabal, who for his selfish refusal to allow David's servants to join in the celebration prepared for the shearers was destroyed by God. The celebration is described as a 'feast in his house, like the feast of a king' (verse 36).



The phrase 'worthy bidden guest' undoubtedly comes from Matthew. 'Then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy . . . and the wedding was furnished with guests' (Matt. xxii. 8, 10). As will be immediately recognized, these verses are from the parable of the marriage of the king's son, which hints at the Last Judgement and ends with the succinct reminder that many are called but few are chosen.

Milton's felicitous epithet 'Blind mouths' may have been inspired by the juxtaposition of blindness and greed in Matthew: 'Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?' (Matt. xxiii. 17, 19).

These 'Blind mouths' are ignorant of all 'That to the faithfull Herd-mans art belongs'. When Milton composed this line, he may have had in mind the tenth chapter of John, wherein Christ defines for his disciples all that pertains to the office of the good shepherd.

St. Peter continues with two rhetorical questions and a pithy answer: 'What recks it them? What need they? They are sped.' Considering this line in its context, we might paraphrase it thus: 'The evil clergy, in their blindness and greed, care nothing about the duties of the faithful herdsman; they feel the need for nothing beyond earthly treasure and power; they are satisfied.' In Matt. vi, Christ admonishes the multitude:

2. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

16. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto man to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

The two independent clauses, 'They have their reward' from Matthew and 'They are sped' from *Lycidas*, are synonymous; and each follows the censure of those who are concerned with worldly rather than spiritual matters.

In the already quoted verses from Matthew which I believe contribute most to the identification of 'that two-handed engine', damnation is prophesied for those who have not fed even 'one of the least of these'. It is the essence of Milton's condemnation of the corrupt clergy that 'The hungry Sheep look up, and are not fed'.

Professor Le Comte seizes upon the wolf which 'catcheth . . . and scattereth the sheep' in John x. 12, as the prototype for Milton's 'grim

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Woolf with privy paw' who 'Daily devours apace'. But a much closer parallel exists in Matt. vii. 15: 'Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.' Herein are found both the element of secrecy contained in 'privy paw' and the conception of insatiable appetite inherent in 'Daily devours apace'.

The conspicuous resemblances between Milton's verse paragraph and the book of Matthew do not, to be sure, establish an exclusive influence. Certainly elements from John x are present in St. Peter's speech. Still, the similarity between this book and the passage in *Lycidas* is a surface one. Both are parables which employ the pastoral idiom, and both contrast the hireling with the true pastor. In John x, however, the emphasis is on salvation; while in *Lycidas* and in Matthew, censure of the false teachers for hypocrisy, greed, and spiritual blindness is central, as is the prophecy of their damnation. I should hesitate to urge that Milton had any one book of the Bible before him as he wrote. But for those of us whose acquaintance with the Scriptures needs frequently to be refreshed, the book of Matthew should help to clarify the most controversial lines in Milton's poetry. These lines, I suggest, become clear if 'that two-handed engine' is understood to be the Son of God in his capacity of judge, when at the Second Advent—which impends ('at the door')—he will carry out the sentence of the Father's immutable law, separating good men from evil, and committing to eternal fire by one irrevocable stroke the corrupt and faithless clergy. The solution, then, is simple, as it was intended to be; for it was natural enough to assume that in the Biblical phrases and echoes which characterize St. Peter's denunciation the seventeenth-century reader would recognize a ready key to the meaning of the final couplet.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 'Maye Aeglogue' of Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* provides an interesting analogue of the interpretation advanced in this paper. Spenser, it will be recalled, was admired by Milton in the *Areopagitica* as 'our sage and serious poet . . . a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas'. I do not wish to imply that Spenser's lines served as Milton's source, for it seems to me far more logical to suppose that the two poets merely drew from the same fountain-head—the Bible. The passage has been previously noticed in connexion with St. Peter's speech in *Lycidas*; but the last four lines—which seem to me vital—have never before, I think, been considered in the light of their possible relationship to the final couplet. Spenser denounces the hireling clergy of his day in the following verses:

Those faytours litle regarden their charge,  
While they, letting their sheepe runne at large,  
Passen their time, that should be sparely spent,  
In lustihede and wanton meryment.  
Thilke same bene shepeheardes for the Devils stedde,  
That playen while their flockes be unfedde.  
Well is it seene, theyr sheepe bene not their owne,  
That letten them runne at randon alone.  
But they bene hyred for litle pay  
Of other, that caren as litle as they  
What fallen the flocke, so they han the fleece,

And get all the gayne, paying but a peece.  
*I muse what account both these will make,*  
*The one for the hire which he doth take,*  
*And thother for leaving his lords taske,*  
*When great Pan account of shepherdes shall aske.*

(lines 39-54. My italics.)

Spenser's mysterious explicator, E.K., glosses 'great Pan' in the last line of the quotation as 'Christ, the very God of all shepheards, which calleth himself the greate and good shepherd'. The striking similarities between the two verse paragraphs need no demonstration, and it is plain that in Spenser's treatment a weaponless Christ, acting himself as God's engine of justice, is to mete out just punishment to the hireling shepherds.

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## SAMUEL JOHNSON'S CRITICISM OF POPE IN THE *LIFE OF POPE*

By BENJAMIN BOYCE

AMONG the critical essays of Samuel Johnson, the *Life of Pope* seems in the opinion of most people to stand high. It is often contrasted with Johnson's *Lives* of Milton and Gray to show how good Johnson could be when he considered a poet completely within his range, one whom he liked for the right reasons. The common notion is that he wrote the *Pope* easily and expansively in his old age, drawing the material from a well-stocked memory and a fully matured set of critical principles. The *Life of Pope* is also often contrasted with Joseph Warton's *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756), which, whether or not it is regarded as an inferior work of criticism, is usually said to represent a tradition of literary judgement quite opposite to Johnson's. Yet we have recently been warned against depending upon such a simple view of the two works, for it is 'perhaps as unprofitable as it is difficult to try to bring Warton and Johnson to grips on the main theses of the former's *Essay on Pope*'.<sup>1</sup>

A careful examination, paragraph by paragraph and poem by poem, of what Johnson said about Pope in the 1781 *Life* and of what numerous other critics had said about Pope before that date might cause readers to modify their conception of the nature, if not of the merit, of Johnson's essay. For after making such a study and including in my reading Joseph Spence, Addison, Dennis, William Ayre (in his *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Alexander Pope*, 1745), W. H. Dilworth (in his *Life of Pope*, 1759), Percival Stockdale (in his *Inquiry . . . Including A particular Defence of the Writings, and Genius of Mr. Pope*, 1778), Robert Shiels, Warburton, Warton, Owen Ruffhead, Lord Kames, and two or three others, I have come to the conclusion that Johnson's remarks on Pope were not uniformly superior to those of previous critics and that he was, to an extent that probably few readers appreciate, regularly dependent upon those critics for direction in his commentary. When writing the *Pope* he lingered in the company of Dennis and Warton as long as he could, sometimes to his own cost preferring the former to the latter. If in his discussion he frequently chose minor points to comment upon and ignored some larger, more difficult questions, we can see that he was straining to say something fresh and readable and marketable; if he ordinarily did not trouble to cover all the critical ground, we notice that he habitually offered generalizations that would give his paragraphs an air, even a false air, of finality.

<sup>1</sup> Wilbert L. MacDonald, *Pope and His Critics* (London, 1951), p. 298.

Johnson's procedure in the *Pope* is only somewhat like that of his review, written twenty-five years earlier, of the first volume of Joseph Warton's *Essay on Pope*.<sup>1</sup> For though Johnson in that review cavilled over Warton's comments on each poem, he covered the *Essay* more or less fully. The review is cool and exacting and, in a faintly comic way, patronizing; Johnson would not even let Warton be the better critic of Handel's music. Of Warton's fifty-page chapter on *The Rape of the Lock* he declared: 'There is in his remarks on this work no discovery of any latent beauty, nor any thing subtle or striking; he is indeed commonly right, but has discussed no difficult question.' In 1781 Johnson had a better opinion of the *Essay*. At that time, when he was writing comments on those poems that the *Essay* had treated, he must have had Warton's pages open before him again (or, less probably, fixed very exactly in his memory), and when he was not tacitly accepting Warton's ideas he was often tacitly refuting them. In the review of 1756 he had observed that Warton's remarks on *Eloisa to Abelard* had 'not much profundity of criticism', adding in defence of Warton that the 'beauties' of this poem, being 'sentiments of nature', are equally plain to the learned and the ignorant. In 1781 Johnson's own efforts in the direction of 'profundity of criticism' led him to say that *Eloisa* is one of the most happy productions of human wit because its story is true, because its characters were conspicuous for merit, because they at last found quiet and piety, and because the poem has been studiously polished. Investigation reveals that three of these four reasons (of which three nowadays appear dubious) Johnson found in Warton. From Warton, too, came the extravagant first sentence in this passage and the phrases 'eminence of merit' and *curiosa felicitas*.<sup>2</sup> But the extent of Johnson's indebtedness is obscured because the Latin phrase came from Warton's discussion of the *Essay on Criticism* and because the argument that any piece of literature is the better and the more powerful for being historically true was adapted from Warton's conspicuous development of it in connexion with Pope's *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*.<sup>3</sup> Johnson's only original remark on *Eloisa* was that Pope had laudably chosen a story which ended not in dejection

<sup>1</sup> The review, first published in the April-May issue, 1756, of the *Literary Magazine*, is here cited as reprinted in the second volume of *The Works of Samuel Johnson* (1816).

<sup>2</sup> See the *Life of Pope* in *Lives of the English Poets* by Samuel Johnson, ed. G. B. Hill (Oxford, 1905), iii. 235-6.

Anticipations of Johnson's remarks on *Eloisa* are also to be found in Ayre's *Memoirs*, i. 70; in Dilworth's *Life of Alexander Pope*, pp. 31-33; in Stockdale's *Inquiry*, where twenty-five rhapsodic pages are given to this poem—and to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*; and in the preface to *Letters of Abelard and Heloise. To which is prefixed a particular Account of their Lives...* By John Hughes (1776).

<sup>3</sup> That the touchstone of truth, whatever its value in critical theory, had best not be applied to Pope's *Eloisa* occurs to one as one reads Geoffrey Tillotson's discussion of the poem in his edition of *The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems* (Twickenham Edition, London, 1940), pp. 275-91.

but in piety. The fact is, however, that as Pope treats the story it ends without Eloisa's being made to seem either really pious or resigned. Indeed according to Owen Ruffhead, usually Pope's defender, *Eloisa* may have 'done no service to the cause of virtue'.<sup>1</sup> Johnson's criticism of this poem, far from surpassing Warton's, shames the Great Cham.

A comparison of Johnson's *Pope* and Warton's *Essay* reveals other relationships.<sup>2</sup> The *Essay* being of the 'gushing' sort that Johnson disliked, Warton necessarily deserves on occasion the scoffing description given, presumably by Johnson, to Warton's avowed enemy, Ruffhead—he 'says of fine passages, that they are fine, and of feeble passages, that they are feeble'.<sup>3</sup> In the *Life of Pope* Johnson said he would not pause to note 'petty beauties', and he avoided this apparently foolish habit while he was discussing the poems that Warton had discussed—namely, the *Pastorals*, *Windsor Forest*, the St. Cecilia ode, the *Essay on Criticism*, *The Rape of the Lock*, the *Elegy*, and *Eloisa*; but when Johnson came to the *Dunciad* and the *Moral Essays* he more than once descended to specifying fine passages. In the case of the *Pastorals* and *Windsor Forest* a great array of earlier criticisms discouraged his resorting to that method, but he could still judiciously point out feeble passages, particularly the one proudly offered by Ruffhead to disprove Warton's (and Johnson's) assertion that the *Pastorals* contained no new images.<sup>4</sup> Everything Johnson said about these two works had roots in the earlier discussions. It may not be surprising that in judgements upon the *Pastorals* he was closer to Warton than to Ruffhead, and yet he had a lower opinion of that work, of *Windsor Forest*, and of the St. Cecilia ode than even Warton had. One observes in general that Warburton and the so-called pre-Romantic, Warton, displayed a greater interest than Johnson in discovering models for Pope in classical literature; but this difference may again be due merely to their having come first. Warton, usually alluded to as one who helped to lower the reputation of Pope, in almost every case wrote about the work under scrutiny with interesting enthusiasm; he rouses in the reader a desire to return to the poem. Johnson rarely seems so enthusiastic. The analytical reader would see that Johnson was Pope's champion, but the casual and emotional reader, at least after he had got beyond the Dedictory Epistle, would suppose the champion to be Warton. The careful reader with all the texts before him would notice that

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Alexander Pope* (1769), p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Misunderstanding of the relationship of Johnson's criticism to Warton's has been fostered by the Elwin-Courthope edition of Pope in which footnote references to Warton are regularly to an edition that appeared after Johnson's *Life* rather than to those (1756, 1762, 1764, 1772) that preceded it.

<sup>3</sup> From a review of Ruffhead's *Life* in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, xxxix (1769), 255, which is thought to be by Johnson (see *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, ed. G. B. Hill and L. F. Powell, Oxford, 1934-50, ii. 166 n.).

<sup>4</sup> It is the line about Zephyrs lamenting in silence. See Ruffhead's *Life*, p. 32.



the best criticism and most of the genuine literary criticism in Johnson's *Pope* occur not because Johnson was provoked by a poem but because he was provoked by a critic, usually Dennis or Warton. When Johnson finished his remarks on *Eloisa* he had reached the end of Warton's volume, and he appropriately inserted at that point a paragraph in praise of the *Essay* to which he was so much indebted. Pope's later works he had to discuss without the stimulation of Warton's commentary. What he found to say about those works was in no case, if we except the *Homer*, as carefully or helpfully directed at literary values as his remarks on the earlier pieces had been.

Not that the discussion of the *Essay on Man* or the *Homer* is less readable than the preceding pages. But Johnson treated the former as it had been treated in the arguments of 1738-9 between Warburton and Crousaz—that is, for its ideas. Many critics besides the egregious Warburton had pronounced the *Essay* to be a sublime poem, noble in its morality and profound in thought,<sup>1</sup> and Johnson attempted to put an end to such careless and presumptuous commentary by three splendid paragraphs of sarcasm. Acknowledging the blaze of Pope's embellishment and the sweetness of his melody and not forgetting the concomitant passages of obscurity and harshness, Johnson went no further into literary analysis of a work which he regarded as dangerous.

The *Homer* he took up just after he finished with Warton's volume. One can almost hear him drawing a deep breath before starting upon that 'poetical wonder', of which an alarming number of more or less authoritative analyses were in print. Now instead of re-reading the commentators, which I believe had been his procedure before writing on the earlier poems, he threw all his force behind one bold principle—that an elegant and graceful translation of Homer was better for his day than a more faithful, more sublime version—and launched into panegyric on this greatest of the world's translations. In the biographical section of the *Pope* he had offered a set of variants from the poet's manuscripts of the poem; these would interest readers of the sort who had followed the detailed criticisms made by Dennis<sup>2</sup> and Spence<sup>3</sup> and *Idler* paper seventy-seven. But here Johnson presented only a general view of the work. Contradicting the principle he had recently recognized in the *Life of Dryden* that in a good translation 'rugged magnificence is not to be softened', he swept over history—and opponents—in a grand way which was probably the result of his having no longer either to defer to Warton's wide knowledge of the ancient and modern

<sup>1</sup> Maynard Mack in his edition of the *Essay on Man* (Twickenham Edition, London, 1950), pp. xvi-xvii, lists some of the early admirers. Arthur Murphy in 1762 in his 'Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding' (*The Works of Henry Fielding*, i. 20) and Percival Stockdale in 1778 in his *Inquiry* were still praising the poem as sublime and wise.

<sup>2</sup> *Remarks upon Mr. Pope's Translation of Homer* (1717).

<sup>3</sup> *An Essay on Mr. Pope's Odyssey* (1726).

background of Pope's poems or to take account of Warton's close and appreciative criticisms. Johnson's genius was no longer rebuked by his as it is said Mark Antony's was by Caesar.

But for the remaining pieces Johnson's critical energy flagged, and he showed how much he needed Warton's stimulation. His remarks are perfunctory on the literary aspects of Pope's *Moral Essays*, his *Horace* and the *Satires*, and even on the *Dunciad*. The *Imitations of Horace*, declared this author of an impressive imitation of Juvenal, 'cannot give pleasure to common readers'. In the biographical section of the *Life* one of the *Moral Essays*, that addressed to Lord Cobham, had moved him to write some animated sentences, but they deal only with Pope's false and pernicious doctrine of the Ruling Passion, and Johnson's attack was rephrased from a long footnote which he had appended to his translation of Crousaz's commentary on the *Essay on Man* forty years before.<sup>1</sup> Although the criticism of 'epistolary correspondence' had already begun,<sup>2</sup> Johnson was not interested in the subject. He was content, therefore, in spite of a dislike of Pope's letters as being too 'artificial', to echo Warburton's untrustworthy assertion that 'they are the only true models which we . . . have, of *familiar Epistles*'<sup>3</sup> and to discuss them exclusively for what they reveal about Pope's character. Johnson could not rise above the usual personal response to these letters.

As for John Dennis's critical writings on Pope, Johnson utilized them in much the same way as Warton's—approving, objecting, borrowing, ignoring, all somewhat unpredictably, with the result of obscuring the extent and nature of his obligation. One notices that he quoted at length from one of Dennis's essays to illustrate his malice and violence; one observes also that he corrected errors in Dennis's criticisms of *Windsor Forest*, the *Essay on Criticism*, and *The Rape of the Lock*; one might therefore conclude that Johnson had little respect for his opinion. Yet in reality Johnson's paragraphs on those three poems include significant points of agreement with Dennis, and in his discussion of *Windsor Forest* the best remark was provoked by Dennis.<sup>4</sup> But it is unfortunate that Johnson fell under his spell rather than Warton's in discussing *The Rape of the Lock*.

<sup>1</sup> *A Commentary on Mr Pope's Principles of Morality, Or Essay on Man* (1742), p. 109. Cf. Johnson's *Life of Pope, Lives of the English Poets*, iii. 174.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see the prefaces to *Letters Upon several Occasions; Written by and between Mr. Dryden, Mr. Wycherly, Mr. ———, Mr. Congreve, and Mr. Dennis* (1696) and to *Select Epistles or Letters out of M. Tullius Cicero; and the best Roman, Greek, and French Authors both Ancient and Modern. Adapted to the Humour of the present Age. By Mr. Tho. Brown* (1702).

<sup>3</sup> See his edition of *The Works of Alexander Pope* (1751), i. ix. Johnson wrote: 'Pope's epistolary excellence had an open field; he had no English rival, living or dead' (*Lives of the English Poets*, iii. 159).

<sup>4</sup> Dennis in *Remarks upon Mr. Pope's Translation of Homer* had complained of want of

Nothing in the *Life* has perhaps been admired more than the section in the middle of the work that provides a sketch of Pope's intellectual habits and talents and the final section offering a Character of Pope as poet. The former section is beautifully written and contains the paragraphs comparing Pope and Dryden. By 1781 it had become something of a habit of critics to compare Pope and Dryden, and Dilworth had added, as an extra, curious variation, a demonstration that one of Dennis's attacks on Pope was merely a paraphrase of Milbourne's remarks on Dryden.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Murphy had attempted to clarify the criticism of Pope by distinguishing two kinds of invention, primary and secondary, of which Pope possessed the secondary, polishing sort.<sup>2</sup> Warton had used, apropos of the *Essay on Criticism*, a contrast of two hypothetical poets, the swift, impulsive, and imaginative sort and the cautious, diligent, correct sort, to which latter class we were to assign Alexander Pope. The most elaborate of the comparisons of Dryden and Pope was that published in Cibber's *Lives of the Poets* (1753), written probably by Johnson's friend and amanuensis, Robert Shiels. From this comparison, included in the section on Pope, Johnson took ideas and phrases for his estimate of the genius and knowledge of the two poets and for his statement of the superiority of each over the other; and Johnson, like Shiels, only after hesitation placed Pope below Dryden in genius. (The possibility that Shiels obtained his ideas and his phrases from Johnson in the first place is one I need not explore here.) All these essays in comparison no doubt derived something of their inspiration ultimately from the striking effort Pope himself had made in the preface to his *Iliad* to illuminate the quality of Homer by a prolonged comparison with Virgil. Professor Margaret Gregg of Winthrop College, in a paper not yet published, has demonstrated that Johnson built up his comparison of Dryden and Pope by a clever adaptation of the logic, the imagery, and the cadence of Pope's brilliant sentences. Splendid as is this portion of Johnson's *Life*, the credit for its ideas and for its style belongs by no means entirely to him. And, strictly speaking, much of it is not literary criticism.

In the Character of Pope as poet at the end of the *Life* Johnson was again usually with the majority in his judgements, especially on the question of the nature and extent of Pope's genius and on that of his versification. In declaring Pope to possess all the qualities that constitute a poet he delivered a vigorous reply to Warton's main attack; in denying that Pope's versifica-

design in the poem. Johnson suggested that *Windsor Forest* belongs to a kind of art in which merit would inhere in a seemingly casual interchanging of description, narrative, and morality rather than in a regular, climactic design. Cf. *Lives of the English Poets*, iii. 225.

<sup>1</sup> 'A Parallel of the Characters of Mr. Dryden and Mr. Pope', *Life of Alexander Pope*, pp. 138-50.

<sup>2</sup> *The Works of Henry Fielding*, i. 16-20.

tion was ever 'too uniformly musical' he contradicted Shiels, with whom at most points he was in conspicuous agreement. These paragraphs, written without the model of any other passage so far as I know, are more meaty than those on Pope's intellectual nature, and they are less rhetorical. In the explanation of what constitutes poetic genius, where Johnson seems to have worked out his remarks cautiously and exactly, he made his best contribution. The other observations in this section are either not new or not important.

As one reads through Johnson's commentary on the individual poems one is struck occasionally by the oddity of his choice of topics to consider or by his method of attack or by the conclusions reached. Explanation is to be sought in the previous critics as much as in Johnson's own disposition. For example, one might wonder why most of what Johnson had to offer on the *Essay on Criticism* is either on the subject of the simile or on the question of adapting sound to sense in poetry. Johnson opened the former subject by the surprising and seemingly gratuitous declaration that Pope's comparison of the student's progress in the sciences with the traveller's journey in the Alps is the best simile in English poetry. But Johnson had been led into this. John Dennis had ridiculed the similes in this poem.<sup>1</sup> Warton mentioned the Alps simile to say that it was overrated, that it lacked particularity, and that its last line was redundant; instead he found another simile in the poem—one that Dennis had scoffed at—to call the most apposite and most elegantly expressed in any language.<sup>2</sup> Warburton singled out the prismatic-glass simile for praise, and Ruffhead in a characteristic straddle agreed with both Warburton and Warton.<sup>3</sup> Johnson himself in 1756 praised the Alps simile as 'perhaps the best simile in our language' and refuted Warton's criticism of the last line on Warton's own ground: the line contributes particularity. In the *Life of Pope* Johnson repeated much of what he had said in 1756 but added, for the sake of readers baffled by the contradictions of previous critics, his simple but strong clarification of what constitutes a good simile.

As for the question of representing ideas in poetry by the mere sounds of words, the familiar passage on this subject in Part II of the *Essay on*

<sup>1</sup> *Reflections Critical and Satyrical, upon a Late Rhapsody, Call'd, An Essay upon Criticism* (n.d.), pp. 8, 9, 11, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope* (1756), pp. 142, 116. The simile praised by Warton (*Essay on Criticism*, i. 54-59) is:

As on the land while here the ocean gains,  
In other parts it leaves wide sandy plains;  
Thus in the soul while Memory prevails,  
The solid power of Understanding fails;  
Where beams of warm Imagination play,  
The Memory's soft figures melt away.

<sup>3</sup> See Warburton's *Pope*, i. 174 n.; Ruffhead, pp. 81-84.

*Criticism* naturally led Johnson to reiterate the scepticism he had expressed many years before in *Rambler* papers ninety-two and ninety-four. But there were additional provocations. The suggestions made in the *Rambler* had been caught up by Lord Kames in his *Elements of Criticism* (1762) and developed into a discussion that quite outdistanced Johnson's amateurish treatment of the problems involved.<sup>1</sup> Of course, said Kames, sound cannot resemble other things such as movement, but even those readers 'who are defective in taste' can see that the emotional effect of sound might resemble the emotional effect of movement. He illustrated his discussion with Broome's lines from the *Odyssey* beginning

With many a weary step, and many a groan,  
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone,

and also with Pope's line

When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw.

George Campbell in his *Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776) took up the same material, approving of some of Johnson's remarks but also of some of Kames's.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, Owen Ruffhead boldly quoted the *Rambler's* discussion of the subject, accepted some of Johnson's animadversions, but declared that he must 'have a very singular ear' who finds no softness in the line that Johnson said had no great softness; Ruffhead declared further that the Ajax line is, in spite of the *Rambler's* denial, slow and heavy.<sup>3</sup>

Johnson in the *Life of Pope* stood his ground, yielding an inch to Lord Kames in admitting that motion might 'in some sort' be exemplified, perhaps in the four lines by Broome. But Johnson then tried to regain the ground just yielded by offering a parody of Broome's lines, a not entirely persuasive parody. He quoted the Ajax passage too, shifting his attack *en passant* to the slowness of the Alexandrine, so much praised for its speed. Johnson's discussion here, I am afraid, proves nothing that had not been proved already by himself or by Lord Kames—that is, unless it proves that the allusions to people 'defective in taste', people with 'a very singular ear', had got under his skin and caused him to lay down the law once more. But Kames and Campbell had given the subject a better treatment.

Another oddity in the *Life of Pope* is the criticism of the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, which though a minor poem Johnson examined stanza by stanza. Again the explanation is that Johnson was following others. William Ayre and Warburton and Warton and Ruffhead and Johnson in his 1756 review had all gone through this laborious 'seriatim' process, disagreeing with each other's judgements as they moved from one stanza to

<sup>1</sup> *Elements of Criticism*, 2nd edn. (Edinburgh, 1763), ch. xviii, section iii.

<sup>2</sup> Book III, ch. i, section 3.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 86-87.



the next. Even Spence had contributed to the argument, anticipating Warton in calling the first stanza 'a perfect Concert'.<sup>1</sup> Johnson's re-examination of the whole poem (in the course of which he omitted some of his earlier haggling, particularly his sally into the criticism of Handel's music) was no doubt intended to settle the argument.

Remembering Johnson's harsh comment in 1756 on Warton's criticism of *The Rape of the Lock*, we ought to expect in Johnson's remarks something subtle, fresh, striking, or illuminating. We shall be disappointed. Because John Dennis had devoted many singularly humourless and pedantic pages to condemnation of Pope's 'machines' for numerous faults, including that of not being structurally functional,<sup>2</sup> and also because Joseph Warton had written at length of the machines as charming, poetic, and useful for oblique satire, Johnson was led to take up this question too. In the earlier part of the *Life* he seemed to be agreeing with Warton that the machines were a triumph, but in the later pages he sided, though somewhat grudgingly, with Dennis.<sup>3</sup>

Johnson also treated the question—hardly a difficult one—of the moral of the poem. Here again he was placing himself with Dennis rather than Warton. To be sure, he declared Dennis incorrect in asserting that the poem has no moral; but Johnson contemplated this gay poem without a smile just as Dennis had done, and he found a moral in it which seems to have been adapted from Dennis's melancholy lucubrations on female vanity.<sup>4</sup>

Johnson's third point—that the power of the poem comes especially from the poet's making new things familiar and familiar things new—is, as an abstract principle, more striking than anything Warton had offered. Yet Warton had spoken appreciatively of the lively effect of parody in the poem and of the beautiful mixture of serious and comical; the mind of the reader 'is engaged by novelty, when it so unexpectedly finds a thought or object it had been accustomed to survey in another form, suddenly arrayed in a ridiculous garb'; one is delighted with Pope's success in 'giving elegance to so familiar an object' as a coffee-pot.<sup>5</sup> Johnson's principle was not, then, entirely new, and by itself it is no more valuable than various suggestions

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on Mr. Pope's Odyssey*, 2nd ed. (1737), p. 152.

<sup>2</sup> *Remarks on Mr. Pope's Rape of the Lock* (1728), pp. 19–30. As Johnson indicates, Warburton had also discussed the machines, but enthusiastically; see his *Pope*, i. 219 n. Ruffhead, p. 105, repeated Warburton's remarks.

<sup>3</sup> *Lives of the English Poets*, iii. 104, 235.

<sup>4</sup> The sylphs, said Dennis, promote female vanity, and 'Vanity is not only a great Defect in Human Nature, but the Mother of a thousand Errors, and a thousand Crimes, and the Cause of most of the Misfortunes which are incident to Humanity' (p. 29). Johnson says: 'The freaks, and humours, and spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in discord and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the clergy in many centuries' (iii. 234).

<sup>5</sup> *Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, pp. 237, 234.



made by Warton for explaining the success of this complex and captivating poem.

Johnson's *Life of Pope*, we may conclude, was both better and worse because of its responsiveness to the earlier critics. When Johnson engaged himself with literary rather than moral or philosophical questions, he was usually writing under pressure from others. Yet he could be led away from poetic matters by his predecessors. The air of authority, the energy of the expression, the seeming fairness, the clarity and arresting directness of its thought make the *Pope* impressive and memorable. But the quantity of 'naked criticism' (to use Johnson's phrase) is smaller than one might imagine and, when original, it is less valuable as criticism of Pope's writing than the reputation of the *Life* would make one believe. Johnson did not initiate so much as he attempted to adjudicate; he was often writing a critique of the critics. He frequently shared opinion with Pope's most hostile commentators, but he did not always wish us to notice that. Of the later poems and the personal letters there were no good criticisms to impel him into thought; Johnson is dull when the world is dull. He is as a critic most interesting when he is arguing, even perversely arguing. Too often the value of his comments would be much enhanced if the reader were familiar with the criticisms he was criticizing. As he said, he was not writing just to philosophers and poets; hence he did not beat over the ground well covered by Dennis or Spence or Warton, and he is consequently more readable. But the readability of his *Pope* is due in part to the sense Johnson had of being in converse with worthy opponents; as in those many dramatic colloquies reported by Boswell, so in writing his criticism of Pope, Johnson listened to one speaker and then another, replying roughly to some remarks, ignoring others, borrowing the language of one man, handing a rare compliment to someone else in a moment of happy agreement, perpetually demanding the last word, even if he had to roar to get it. The pity is that the average reader of the *Pope* does not hear the other voices in the long and interesting and yet frequently only desultory conversation.

## BLAKE'S DRAWINGS FOR YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS

By H. M. MARGOLIOUTH

OF all Blake's work his water-coloured drawings for Young's *Night Thoughts* must be the least known in comparison with their quantity and importance. Yet they must have been his main occupation for about eighteen months, from the autumn of 1795 to the spring of 1797. From then until 1874 they were unknown. The facts are set out by Mr. Keynes in *Blake Studies* (1949), pp. 56-66. In June 1875 J. Comyns Carr devoted to these drawings seven pages (728-35) of an article on Blake in the *Cornhill*. For the second edition (1880) of Gilchrist's *Life of Blake* F. Shields wrote an appendix (vol. ii, pp. 289-307) describing some of the drawings in detail, but it was unfortunately omitted from Graham Robertson's reprint of this edition (1906, 1922, 1928). Mr. Keynes described thirty of them in 1927. There is very little else to read about them. Those thirty drawings were reproduced (five in colour) by the Harvard University Press (1927), Wright's *Life of William Blake* (1929) reproduced six, four of them new, and Keynes's *Blake Studies* (1949) five, three of them new. That makes thirty-seven out of 537, and in addition there are, of course, the forty-three engraved by Blake for Edwards's June 1797 publication of the first four Nights. Thus 457 are unknown except to those who have seen the originals, which have since 1928 been, by American generosity, in the Print Room of the British Museum.

That 1797 publication is a pretty rare book. There is no copy in the Bodleian. The first two Nights have been reproduced (Butterworth, 1911), Soupault's *William Blake* (1928) reproduced fourteen of the engravings and some have been reproduced elsewhere. Binyon's *Engraved Designs of William Blake* (1926) catalogues all forty-three, quoting the line asterisked on each page as being the subject of the picture and also quoting the short descriptions, most certainly not written by Blake, which accompanied the 1797 publication. Binyon also reproduced the engraved title-page to Night III. A few of the engravings may not have been reproduced at all. In any case reproduction of the engravings is not the same thing as reproduction of the drawings. Most of them lost much by losing the colours. Moreover, Blake's engraving in 1796-7 had not reached the mastery of the *Job* period. There is, for example, too much conventional line and criss-cross work in the backgrounds. Some of the drawings are reversed in the engravings. In some of the engravings the design has been altered a little from the drawing. Interesting examples are provided by the engravings

for page 37 (Night II, p. 35, lines 563-80 in the drawings) and page 63 (Night III, p. 33, lines 511-28 in the drawings).

In the first of these the asterisked line, in both engraving and drawing, is

Love, and Love only, is the Loan for Love.

To illustrate this Blake chose the story of the Good Samaritan. He has got at the heart of Young's line. The injured man is not just a lay figure. He lies on his back with his head raised in horror, and his right hand makes a determined gesture of refusal. The Good Samaritan faces him and holds a closed egg-shaped vessel decorated on the outside with a serpent in relief. The injured man is a good Jew. He is horrified at being rescued by a Samaritan, whose vessel of healing oil or wine seems as sinister as a serpent. Blake had not yet coined the phrase about corporeal friends being spiritual enemies, but here is an apparent example of it—unless indeed the injured man fears that the Samaritan may be a corporeal enemy also. Perhaps finishing you off with poison is just what a Samaritan would do. The Good Samaritan persists. He hopes by lending love to be repaid with love. At any rate love is the only loan which can be so repaid.<sup>1</sup>

The trees in the engraving differ considerably from those in the drawing. In both there is a coverlet over the lower part of the injured man, but in the engraving it is over his feet too, whereas in the drawing they project from the blue coverlet. But the most interesting difference is in the face of the Good Samaritan. In the drawing his mouth is a little more open and his head more bent than in the engraving: he looks shocked or at least perplexed, whereas in the engraving he looks more sure of himself and, perhaps, more beneficent.

On p. 63 of the engraved edition the asterisked line is

THIS KING OF TERRORS IS THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

It is the last page of Night III. Edwards was responsible for the capitals and also for a complete change from Blake's intention.

It must be explained that the pages of text, round which and in connexion with which Blake made his drawings, contain on an average less than twenty lines. Edwards provided an engraving for less than half his pages; a full page with an engraving usually contains thirty lines and one without an engraving also thirty, the wide margins remaining blank. Consequently the lines on an engraved page can only partly correspond to those on a page of the drawings. It is, however, only on p. 63 that Edwards made a real, and doubtless deliberate, muddle.

<sup>1</sup> Years before I knew this picture I wrote a poem entitled 'Neighbour' (included in *Intimation and Other Poems*, Oxford, 1948) which supposes the injured man to be much embarrassed by having the Samaritan later on as a neighbour.

On p. 33 (lines 511-28), the *last but one* of Night III, Blake asterisked

Death, the Great Counsellor, who Man inspires.

He then drew a white-bearded, half-reclining figure of Death, holding an open scroll between his hands. The scroll has on it a few indeterminate marks to indicate writing. The 'Great Counsellor' looks straight in front of him, wise and beneficent.

On p. 34 (lines 529-44), the last of Night III, Blake asterisked

Spring from our Fetters; fasten in the Skies.

The picture shows Death removing a chain from the left ankle of a man who is preparing to rise and already lifts his left arm to the sky. On the left a woman rises, with both arms outstretched, into the blue sky.

Edwards did not include this drawing. He preferred to end the Night with the more striking picture of Death, but the line about the Great Counsellor was back on his previous page (62). So a new line, the last but two, was asterisked, and also heavily capitalized, when the lines were printed in the blank space left by the engraving: but the reason for the scroll, which should have contained counsel, is no longer apparent. In fact the whole picture is attached to the wrong line.

There is one change from the drawing. The indeterminate marks on the scroll are replaced by nine short lines of Hebrew lettering, but it is very queer Hebrew. In the first place it is reversed. Blake evidently engraved it from right to left on the plate with the result that a mirror-image, from left to right, appears on the page. A first impression, however, that it is a mere meaningless jumble of letters has to be partly modified, because Blake has almost certainly confused letters of similar but not identical form. A Hebraist tells me that reasonable guesses at what Blake meant to write may reveal words meaning 'thou' (twice), 'death', 'the fire' (twice), and 'dust', though a good deal must remain completely unintelligible. In another of these drawings (ix, p. 17, lines 314-34) there are two Hebrew words, meaning 'hereafter pain' and referring to 'Awful Eternity! offended Queen!', which are fairly correct. There is also some Hebrew lettering in Night V, p. 25 (the Sibyl), but it was at some later date that Blake learnt enough Hebrew to be accurate in the Enoch, Laocoön, and Job pictures. Here he seems to have been provided with some Hebrew, perhaps not very legible, of which he made a muddle. It does look, however, as if perhaps an effort was made to adapt the counsel to the 'King of Terrors'—not a very successful adaptation.

To work right through the 537 drawings is a fascinating task; to read right through Young's *Night Thoughts* is less fascinating, but it is not as wearisome as we are sometimes led to expect. I am sure of one thing:

Blake did not despise his author. He did not asterisk lines in the first Night before making the drawings, but after that he generally, not always, did so, and he also sometimes marked or underlined other lines that struck him. The otherworldliness of Young's poem, its insistence on immortality and the values which a firm belief in immortality compels, must have appealed to him strongly. At least twice he remembered Young's actual words years later. Young's Night VI, line 655 runs

Of two eternities amazing Lord!

The two eternities are separated by the Creation. The reminiscence of Young may help to explain what was in Blake's mind when he wrote (*Milton* 14; 11 in Sloss and Wallis):

The Sin was begun in Eternity, and will not rest to Eternity,  
Till two Eternitys meet together,

or, twice in *Jerusalem* (86 and 98), 'from Eternity to Eternity'.

About twenty-one years after finishing his drawings for the *Night Thoughts* Blake reissued his 1793 *Gates of Paradise* with new verses which include the well-known Epilogue beginning:

Truly, My Satan, thou art but a Dunce.

That 'Truly' is an endorsement of the last line of Young's Night VIII,

Satan, thy master, I dare call a dunce.

Blake had not asterisked the line, but his drawing shows Satan, red-skinned, bald with white tufts, wearing only a blue skirt, kneeling and bowing to Christ, and offering him a stone to be made bread. Christ, upright in white, holds up his left hand in refusal. Satan knew no better!

Much more important is the fact that some of these drawings have value not only in themselves or as helping us to know Blake's mind during these eighteen months from which we have no poetry, but also because they reappear with some changes in later or greater pictures. Mr. Keynes reproduced ix, p. 19, illustrating 'those Shouts of Joy, that shake the whole *Ethereal*', the line of praising angels whose raised arms cross each other and suggest an unending host, the picture which we all know in its most developed form in *Job*, Illustration xiv, 'When the morning Stars sang together'. But there are others. On Night I, p. 6, which has no asterisked line, is a drawing which was not engraved. The main figure is of the back view of a naked traveller. He has a stick in his left hand, his right arm is bent over his head, the right leg which is in front is bent, and his left foot far behind (so many of Blake's figures take immense strides) is raised on the toes. There are also three children, one reading and two playing, and a large tomb of which no one takes any notice. The main figure is, except



in two points, exactly the same as the main figure on plate 97 of *Jerusalem*, the climax of Albion's travailing and travelling, where, standing on the dark-green edge of Earth, disregarding the waning moon and single star to his right, he<sup>1</sup> looks under his raised right arm straight into the great sun-rays. Instead of the walking-stick his left hand now holds the globe of light, the sun from which the vast rays stream. It is a notable development. The other difference, a suggestion of clothing about the thigh, seems unimportant.

The same change, globe of light for walking-stick, is found in the well-known frontispiece to *Jerusalem*. In Night II, p. 28, another unengraved drawing, the asterisk is against

The cunning Fugitive is swift by stealth.

The fugitive is life. As sometimes happens, it is here not the actual line but the whole passage which Blake illustrates. A man is entering the house of Death. We see the back of a young-looking traveller with round hat, sleeved long coat, legs bare from the knees, stick in right hand, whose left foot is *on* the threshold and whose right foot is half lifted. His left hand is spread out. A white-bearded man has half-opened the Gothic door in a church-like building.

In the frontispiece to *Jerusalem* we have the same figure, who in his right hand holds not a walking-stick but a globe of light. It is his right foot that is *over* the threshold, for by this time Blake had come to symbolize spiritual and material by right and left respectively. Death no longer appears, nor do some minor figures and decorations. In fact, though the man is the same, the picture no longer represents the approach to physical death but the voluntary entering by the imagination of that grave of the spirit in which Man lies and from which he must be redeemed. That was part of Blake's developed Christianity. One cannot say when precisely the *Jerusalem* picture was made, but its engraving was more than twenty years after the *Night Thoughts* illustrations.

The correspondence between the main figures in each of these pairs of pictures is too close to be explained by visual memory, even when we allow for Blake's exceptional powers of visualization. He must have had copies of the drawings, or preliminary sketches for them, by him.<sup>2</sup> He cannot have had the drawings we now possess. They were the property of the publisher Edwards, who had paid for them (twenty guineas only, if the story is true) and in whose family they remained for some eighty years. In both these pairs of pictures there is a traveller; and a traveller, not neces-

<sup>1</sup> Or Los, but these distinctions fade with the final integration.

<sup>2</sup> Keynes, *Pencil Drawings by William Blake* (1927), reproduces a sketch of the *Night Thoughts*, i. 6 and *Jerusalem* 97 figure. He is reversed (stick in right hand) and climbs a steep valley.



sarily a pilgrim, figures frequently in these drawings in many different attitudes, situations, and dress or lack of dress. Life as a journey must have been much in Blake's mind at this time. His best-known drawing of a traveller, however, is earlier (1793). It is on plate 14 ('The Traveller hasteth in the Evening') of *The Gates of Paradise*. Not before 1824 did Blake do a set of illustrations for *The Pilgrim's Progress*, but in between, as I have pointed out elsewhere, is the tiny figure of the pilgrim in the great *Milton* illustration of the huge trilithon and the pygmy horseman.

Blake had many experiences of fresh illumination. One of the most notable occurred, perhaps early in 1800, when he was writing *Vala*. It made him change that poem (itself 'A Dream of Nine Nights' in titular imitation of Young) to *The Four Zoas*. It deeply concerned his understanding of Christ and Christianity. Can we from his depiction of Christ in these drawings get nearer his understanding of Christ before the illumination which occurred during the writing of *Vala*? One way of putting this question would be to ask whether the figure of Christ in these drawings is in a different class from the human figures of Time, Death, or Conscience or even from such non-human figures as the Serpent and the Tree.

Leaving aside such a picture as that of the Good Samaritan, where an equation with Christ may be suggested but need not be insisted upon, we find Christ, if I have counted right, in twenty-seven pictures. Of these, four are in Night IV, two in Night VI, one in Night VII, two in Night VIII, and eighteen in Night IX, which is much the longest Night. Five of the first seven are Resurrection pictures. These include the frontispiece to Night IV (called by Young 'The Christian Triumph') and a consecutive series of three, the last page of Night VI where Christ rises naked, the remarkable end-piece to Night VI reproduced by Keynes, and the half-title to Night VII. Night VIII, p. 32, represents Christ seated under the tree of this life and receiving children, and p. 70 has the first temptation in the wilderness already mentioned (Satan the Dunce). The title of Night IX ('The Consolation') suggested to Blake the passage (Luke ii. 25) about Simeon 'waiting for the consolation of Israel'. The picture represents Anna in brown with outstretched left arm and Simeon in white holding the infant in his left hand. This is the only infant Jesus in the series.

The other seventeen in Night IX are very varied, but eight come almost in a block (pp. 109-11, 113-17). There are incidents—the woman with an issue of blood, Pilate asking 'What is Truth?', the Sower sowing, and a banquet difficult to identify with that at Cana or any other recorded. The dead Christ, Christ watching two disciples as fishers of men, Christ the Vine are also biblical. Christ as the Creator, Christ receiving souls or waiting above as an old man dies, Christ knocking at the door behind which the inmates wait ('True Taste of Life, and constant Thought of Death') are in

another category. We begin to forget Young and to find only Blake in Christ depicted as 'Father of All', as 'Father fond' and as 'Father of Immortality to Man'. This last (p. 111) is Blake at his most Blakian. On a reddish-brown rock a clothed man leans back with his feet under him, his hands clasped and his face looking up rather like Adam in 'The Elohim creating Adam', to which, indeed, this seems a companion picture. Here Christ is striding, his right foot lower down the rock and his left on a level with the man's waist. He breathes (rayed lines) into the man's open mouth. Christ's left hand is on the top of the man's head, his right is gathering earth near the man's left elbow. This seems to depict the second of the two accounts in Genesis of the creation of man, 'and man became a living soul'.

With this picture the answer is clear. We have a person not a personification, or, if in a sense a personification, it is not of an experience such as Death, Time, or Conscience but of a self-subsisting reality, a personal Creator. Moreover, the Creator is Christ and beneficent, not the sinister Elohim of the great colour-print. Yet it seems also clear that Blake's Christianity at this time is, if one may so put it, of the highest Old Testament kind, in spite of the symbolical resurrections. The crisis of three years later, which played such havoc with *Vala*, gave him a Christianity of incarnation, sacrifice, and redemption—'the Lamb of God'.

The drawings are interesting in all sorts of other ways. For example, though Blake draws so many nudes and so many figures in what can only be called coloured tights, the drawings also abound in varieties of contemporary costume—hats, shoes, frocks, coats, breeches, frilled night-shirts—not to mention elaborate cushions, feminine hair fashions, and children's toys. One last matter may be selected for special mention, another personification or set of personifications. Many times we come on a female figure, by no means always the same, whom we instinctively want to call Vala, though Vala was a name as yet unknown to Blake's writings. Nature, Earth, Fortune, Venus may be her first name, but it is Vala (the Nature which can be a veil between man and his real life) that she is becoming, and most notably so in Night III, pp. 30 and 31. On p. 30 Blake illustrated the lines

Is not the mighty *Mind* that Son of Heaven!  
By Tyrant *Life* dethron'd, imprison'd, pain'd?

On the left behind bars sits a man wearing a loose loin-cloth, with wrist and ankle chained, bowing his head on his hand. On the right, in a very strangely hunched but quite feasible attitude, sits a crowned naked woman with very long yellow hair. She is 'Life', that is to say the life of the senses only, of the purely 'material', and she keeps Man in a prison. In *Vala* she will be Vala and feed the fires of the 'furnaces of affliction' into which

Luvah has been cast. It does not seem an extravagant guess that Blake's conception of Vala came to him while he was engaged on the *Night Thoughts*. Immediately after that engagement he started on the poem *Vala*, which in the end was disrupted by further illumination, was partly erased, partly rewritten, left chaotic. Yet this, like other guesses at elucidation, needs the help of many minds working for years on material readily at hand. Where would one be with Milton if a large section of his work were available only in a single copy in a public library? How can the large company of students of Blake function adequately when 457 drawings, most of his work for a year and a half of the prime of his life, have never been reproduced?

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## NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

### A NOTE ON *GENESIS B*, 328

Hie hyra gal beswac,  
engles oferhygd, noldon alwaldan  
word weorþian, hæfdon wite micel.

(*Genesis B*, 327-9 [MS. Junius 11])

Dr. Kenneth Sisam in his *Notes on Old English Poetry*<sup>1</sup> frames his remarks on the authority of Old English poetical manuscripts by expressions of doubt on the accuracy of *engles oferhygd*. Two points arise, the first syntactical and stylistic, the second theological.

*Hyra gal*, the subject of *beswac*, is varied by *engles oferhygd*: 'their lust' is varied by 'the angel's arrogance'. As Dr. Sisam says, Old English usage does not allow us to take the singular as generic, translating 'angelic arrogance'. The word *engles* is singular in a plural context, and to avoid this singular and also to overcome what he suggests is a theological difficulty, Dr. Sisam proposes the emendation *egle oferhygd*, comparing with it *Daniel* 678 *oferhyd egle*, and (with a scribal error similar to that alleged in *Genesis B* 328) *Guthlac* 962 (= 935) *engle* for *egle*, and *Christ* 762 *englum* for *eglum*. The word *egle* occurs some eleven times in Old English verse, and though it has no cognate in Old Saxon, and could thus not have been in the source, some originality of vocabulary is not impossible, especially in lines 324-35 which Sievers in *Der Heliand und die angelsächsische Genesis* (p. 16) considered to have been among the passages subjected to revision after translation.

If the passage must be emended on syntactical or theological grounds a better emendation could hardly be suggested. Dr. Sisam's is certainly preferable to the proposed reading of B. J. Timmer who, in his edition of *The Later Genesis*, emends *engles* to *englas*, acc. pl., object of *beswac*.

After Dr. Sisam's demonstration of the fallibility of Anglo-Saxon scribes and his strictures on those who strive where possible to preserve the *unsinnigen lesungen* of the manuscripts, few will wish to take up the cudgels on behalf of a manuscript reading for which so excellent an emendation has been proposed. And yet, though often faulty, the manuscript's is the only authority we have, and before Dr. Sisam's emendation is accepted some further consideration may do, at worst, no harm.

<sup>1</sup> *R.E.S.* (o.s.), xxii (1946), 257 ff. Reprinted: K. Sisam, *Studies in the History of Old English Literature* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 29 ff.

As regards the syntax, is not *hyra gal* varying *engles oferhygd* simply an example of variation of the subject? W. Paetzel<sup>1</sup> lists it as such. He does not even include it in his list of *Grenzfälle zwischen Variation und Aufzählung* (pp. 31 ff.), though it seems to be more in the nature of asyndetic enumeration than simple variation. It is a common feature of variation that the words or phrases varied are not identical, or even closely related, in meaning, though their syntactical function is, of course, identical. The following are some examples from *Genesis B* of such disparate variation:

þonne cymð on uhtan easterne wind,  
forst fyrnum cald. (315-16)

Me habbað hringa gespong,  
sliðhearda sal siðes amyrrad. (377-8)

Nu þu willan hæfst,  
hyldo geworhte heofoncyniges.<sup>2</sup> (504-5)

In lines 327-8 *hyra gal* varying *engles oferhygd* is simply another example of disparate variation. There can be no question of a syntactical difficulty, and such the many editors, with their intense grammatical preoccupation, would not have failed to notice. The style, it must be admitted, is somewhat awkward, but style alone only the most rash would regard as a sufficiently firm criterion for even the slightest textual emendation.<sup>3</sup>

The remaining major objection to the manuscript reading is that made by Dr. Sisam on grounds of theology. If this objection is valid there is good reason to remove its cause and at the same time the cause of the stylistic awkwardness by adopting the slight emendation proposed. It is

<sup>1</sup> 'Die Variationen in der altgermanischen Allitterationspoesie', *Palaestra*, xlviii (1913), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Other examples are to be found in lines 572-3, 617-18, 632-3, 763-4, and 771-2.

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, an example fully as awkward is probably to be found in *Christ* 775-6:

þæt he us gescilde wið sceapan wæpnum,  
lapra lygesearwum.

In this passage there is the similar difficulty of the singular *sceapan* varying the plural *lapra*, as *engles* varies *hyra*. Some may be tempted to emend here too.

E. A. Kock, *Anglia*, xlv. 100 f., believes that *sceapan* is an example of late West Saxon *-an* for *-ena* (Sievers-Brunner, *Altenglische Grammatik*, § 276, Anm. 5; R. Girvan, *Angelsaksisch Handboek*, § 285, Aann. 2). Most of the examples of this development in the poetic manuscripts are by no means certain, and furthermore, it may be noted that all the five examples quoted by Kock in *Anglia*, xliii. 301 (if they were conceded to be genitive plurals) precede either a vowel or *ge-*, which was probably pronounced *i*, though the traditional spelling was retained (except in the middle of words, as in *unigmetes*—cf. Klaeber's edition of *Beowulf*, p. lxxxii) even as late as the *gehaten* of the Middle English annals of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and the *zehatenn* of Orm. It seems, therefore, that elision is the cause of *-an* for *-ena* (or perhaps in some cases for *-ana*—cf. A. Campbell's edition of *The Battle of Brunanburh*, p. 108). Kock by isolating the forms from their context failed to see their origin.

the purpose of the rest of this note to show that on the grounds of theology the manuscript reading is unexceptionable.

Dr. Sisam writes:

The use of *engel* after their Fall deserves notice, though it is easier to explain than the singular *engles* in a plural context. Certainly Lucifer's arrogance has been referred to earlier in the poem (262, 272); but that does not justify the interpretation *engles* = 'Lucifer's' in this passage, where it is emphasized that arrogance is the fault of all the fallen angels (332, 337), and where *engles oferhygd* is naturally taken as a variant of *hyra gal*.

In line 332 it is not, in fact, clearly emphasized that arrogance is the fault of all the fallen angels, and the statement of the cause of their Fall in lines 336-7 is curious:

purh heora miclan mod and þurh miht godes  
and þurh ofermetto ealra swiðost.

In *heora miclan mod* it is explicit that Pride is a sin of which all the fallen angels are guilty; but it seems, though it is impossible to aver it with any certainty, as if the author wishes to give three causes of the Fall: the Pride of the fallen angels, the might of God, and the arrogance, greatest of all, of Lucifer; as if they are all included in the sin of *Superbia* but Lucifer is singled out in it, for with *Superbia* was at once associated the Pride of Lucifer. John Cassian, in that part of his *De Coenobiorum Institutis* which deals with the *collectatio octo principalium vitiorum*, writing of Pride gives as his first example the Pride of Lucifer:

Et ut gravissimae tyrannidis ejus potentiam agnoscamus, angelum illum qui prae nimietate splendoris ac decoris sui Lucifer nuncupatus est, nullo alio quam hoc vitio dejectum coelitus invenimus, et ex illa beata sublimique angelorum statione telo superbiae vulneratum ad inferna fuisse collapsum.<sup>1</sup>

The special emphasis on the Pride of Lucifer, even where he is closely associated with the other rebel angels, is borne out by further examples. The illustration of the Fall of the Angels on page 3 of MS. Junius 11 itself is divided into three panels: the rebellion of the proud, the homage to Satan triumphant by his followers, and God's punishment. The first panel is headed by the words *hu s[e] engyl ongon ofermod wesian*, while the top of the right-hand margin of the third panel bears the inscription *her se hælend gesce[op] helle heom to wite*. The angel in the singular began to be proud, but hell was created for the rebel angels in the plural. Similarly *The Old English Hexameron* makes Satan and his companions fall for the Pride of Satan, his Pride, not theirs: . . . *afeoll se deofol of æðre healian heofonan mid*

<sup>1</sup> Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. xlix, col. 426 f.



*his gegadum for his uppafednyssse into helle wite.*<sup>1</sup> The *Genesis A* passage on the Fall is clearest, perhaps, both in combining singular and plural and in giving the reason for this combination. In the perspicuity of the *Genesis A* passage there is, however, none of the awkwardness of the passage in *Genesis B*.

Hæfdon gielp micel  
 þæt hie wið drihtne dælan meahton  
 wuldorfæstan wic werodes prymme,  
 sid and swegltorht. Him þær sar gelamp,  
 æfst and oferhygd, and þæs engles mod  
 þe þone unræd ongan ærest fremman, . . .

(*Genesis A*, 25-30)

That these quotations cannot be pressed to exclude the vassal angels from the sin of Pride is obvious, and is shown, not only by *Genesis B* 336 f. (quoted above), but also by such statements as that of Bede in his *Hexameron*: . . . *praevaricatores angeli de supernis sedibus suae perversitatis et superbiae merito dejecti [sunt]*. . .<sup>2</sup> All that can safely be said is that it was with Lucifer that Pride was associated in the first place.

In the lines under discussion two sins are referred to, *gal* ('*Luxuria*') and *oferhygd* ('*Superbia*'). These two were chiefly instrumental in bringing about the Fall. All the fallen angels were equally guilty of *Luxuria*, but in *Superbia*, though none of his vassals can be exculpated from it, Lucifer stood first. That is the reason why the poet or the translator varied *hyra gal* with *engles oferhygd*. Dr. Sisam's emendation may improve the style of the passage, but it does so at the cost of some part of the theological associations which are likely to have been in the mind of a writer of religious verse.

'The use of *engel* after their Fall deserves notice, though it is easier to explain than the singular *engles* in a plural context', says Dr. Sisam. Indeed the objection is very slight, not because this is an early stage of their Fall,<sup>3</sup> but because it was as an angel that Lucifer through Pride aspired to be God's equal. Lines 293 f. of the poem say *his engyl ongan ofermede micel ahebban wið his hearran*, and the illustrator of the Fall heads the first panel (as quoted above): *Hu s[e] engyl ongon ofermod wesan*. It is Lucifer's Pride as angel, not as devil; and therefore, even after the Fall his Pride must be referred to as *engles oferhygd*.

E. G. STANLEY

<sup>1</sup> Grein and Wülcker, *Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa*, x, 55 f.

<sup>2</sup> Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. xci, col. 53 A.

<sup>3</sup> Thus B. J. Timmer, *The Later Genesis*, p. 103.

## THE BURIAL PLACE OF GEORGE GASCOIGNE

PROFESSOR C. T. PROUTY, in his *George Gascoigne, Elizabethan Courtier, Soldier, and Poet*,<sup>1</sup> prefers to accept the statement of George Whetstone, in his *Remembraunce of the wel imployed life and godly end of George Gascoigne, Esquire*, that the poet died in 'Stalmsford', Lincolnshire, although Anthony à Wood says that he died in Essex.

Yet Sir Egerton Brydges, in *Censura Literaria*,<sup>2</sup> writes: 'I have in vain searched the registers of Stamford (which are unusually perfect) for the name of George Gascoigne.' His co-worker, Octavius Gilchrist,<sup>3</sup> was similarly unsuccessful in his search of the parish of Bernack—a place four miles from Stamford where Gascoigne was sometime said to have died on a visit to Whetstone's relatives. Gilchrist writes that he also went to Walthamstow in Essex, where Gascoigne spent considerable time in his last years,<sup>4</sup> to see if he could find any verification of Wood's statement. He examined entries in the parish register up to 1650, finding none for Gascoigne.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the matter was left in doubt until in 1926 B. M. Ward brought forward all the evidence he could find to support Wood.<sup>6</sup> But the question seems to be settled by a note in John Drakard's *History of Stamford*,<sup>7</sup> taken from a late manuscript of the same Octavius Gilchrist who had searched both Essex and Lincolnshire in the early years of the century:

The old register of St. Mary's parish, Stamford, was missing when I some years since wished to examine it; but upon the death of John Grainger, a sort of perpetual overseer, it was discovered among his papers, and restored to the church. I therein found the following entry,

'1577, Octo. 13, Mr. Garskinge and Dennys Ashleye was buried:' which unequivocally attests the interment of the romantic George Gascoigne.

John Grainger's removal of the St. Mary's register probably explains why Brydges did not see it when searching in the Stamford area. And perhaps his failure to find it deterred other scholars from looking there for it subsequently.

E. L. BROOKS

<sup>1</sup> New York, 1942; p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> London, 1815; ii. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Cited by Felix E. Schelling, *The Life and Writings of George Gascoigne* (Boston, 1893), p. 102. He refers to *Athenae Oxoniensis*, ii. 437.

<sup>4</sup> *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. John W. Cunliffe (Cambridge, 1920), ii. 137.

<sup>5</sup> *Censura Literaria*, ii (London, 1806), p. 238.

<sup>6</sup> 'The Death of George Gascoigne', *R.E.S.*, ii (1926), 169.

<sup>7</sup> Stamford, 1822; p. 431.

## 'ONE IMMORTAL SONG'

AMONG the lines in Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* which have not yielded a sense wholly satisfying to editors of the poem, there are two which occur in the portrait of Achitophel himself. After the passage (not included in the first edition) on Achitophel's merits as a judge, Dryden exclaims:

O, had he been content to serve the crown,  
With virtues only proper to the gown;  
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed  
From cockle, that oppress'd the noble seed;  
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,  
And Heav'n had wanted one immortal song.  
But wild Ambition loves to slide, not stand,  
And Fortune's ice prefers to Virtue's land.<sup>1</sup>

This group of lines is clear enough except for the third couplet, the couplet which according to the run of the syntax is evidently its climax. Here, the twentieth-century reader is confronted with a reference to David and to 'one immortal song' which at first conveys nothing in particular to him and upon reflection and consultation of the notes still only a rather pointless or an improbable meaning. G. R. Noyes sums up the position in the note he gives to the lines in his latest edition of Dryden's poems:<sup>2</sup>

Two interpretations are possible for this couplet: David would have made a song in honor of Achitophel, so that (a) one of David's songs (perhaps Psalm iii, or the lament of David for Absalom in 2 Samuel xviii. 33) would have been lacking; or (b) so that Dryden would have had no need to write his immortal poem of *Absalom and Achitophel*. The former meaning seems the more likely to be true. The application to Charles II is by no means clear.

I believe that 'the former meaning', slightly modified, is true; but that the particular 'immortal song' intended is not either of those suggested in the note but another which to a large part of Dryden's original audience would have been, if not obvious, at least readily identifiable and unmistakable once identified; and that the whole point of the couplet lies in the contents and implications of the 'song'. Once it has been identified, the application to Charles II becomes clear, and the couplet emerges as perhaps the harshest attack on Shaftesbury that the poem contains<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Absalom and Achitophel*, ll. 192-9.

<sup>2</sup> *The Poetical Works of Dryden* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950).

<sup>3</sup> It is, of course, by no means unusual to find Dryden at his sharpest where he appears most suave; compare the honeyed sentence in his address 'To the Reader': 'I have not so much as an uncharitable wish against Achitophel, but am content to be accus'd of a good-natur'd error, and to hope with Origen, that the Devil himself may at last be sav'd.'

and as its most nearly direct reference to the approaching indictment of him before the Grand Jury.

The interpretation of the couplet which I believe to be right is: David would have made a psalm in honour of Achitophel and that which he made against him (Psalm cix) would have been lacking. In Psalm cix 'David complaineth of his false accusers, which requited him evil for good';<sup>1</sup> the complaint is directed, in verses 6-19, against one adversary in particular who according to some (though not all) of the commentators was Achitophel.<sup>2</sup> The division of opinion about the literal meaning of the psalm is thus set forth by Henry Hammond in his *Paraphrase and Annotations*:

The hundred and ninth Psalm, (composed on occasion whither of Absoloms rebellion, and assuming the government, as the Syriac takes it, or of Davids flight from Saul, as Kimchi and Aben Ezra resolve) is a direful prediction of Gods judgments that should fall upon his enemies, whither Absolon and his Councillor Achitophel, or Saul and Doeg. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Simon Patrick, in a work published in 1680, tells us that 'most interpreters' agree with Kimchi and Abn Ezra that 'David . . . hath respect here to the grievous persecution which he suffered by Saul, and some of his court' and that the particular enemy is 'generally thought to be Doeg the Edomite'.<sup>4</sup> But for Dryden to have been able to refer to the psalm as I think he did, it was not necessary that all or even that most commentators should have held the psalm to be a complaint against Achitophel, it was only necessary that some should have done so; not that the opinion should have been received, but that it should have been among those current. This it was; the Achitophel theory appears, for instance, along with the alternative, both in the *Critici Sacri* of 1660<sup>5</sup> and in Matthew Poole's *Synopsis Criticorum* of 1671.<sup>6</sup>

As a whole and in certain particulars, Psalm cix was admirably fitted to Dryden's purpose. With its help he could, by implication, put into the mouth of Charles II 'a direful prediction of Gods judgments that should fall upon his enemies'. The King's situation as described in the psalm corresponded closely to that suggested in the poem:

<sup>1</sup> *The Dutch Annotations upon the whole Bible . . . ordered . . . by the Synod of Dort, 1618 and published by authority 1637 . . .* [translated] by Theodore Haak (London, 1657).

<sup>2</sup> This appears to have been the only psalm that was held to refer at any length to Achitophel.

<sup>3</sup> *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon the Books of the Psalms, briefly explaining the difficulties thereof* (London, 1659).

<sup>4</sup> *The Book of Psalms Paraphras'd: with arguments to each Psalm* (2 vols.: London, 1680).

<sup>5</sup> *Critici Sacri: Sive Doctissimorum Virorum in SS. Biblia Annotationes, et Tractatus*, ed. John Pearson, Bishop of Chester, and others (9 vols.: London, 1660), vol. iii.

<sup>6</sup> *Synopsis Criticorum Aliorumque S. Scripturae Interpretum* (4 vols.: London, 1669-76), vol. ii.

For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me: they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They compassed me about also with words of hatred; and fought against me without a cause. For my love they are my adversaries . . . .

The psalm could be used to add to the poem, besides a violent curse upon Achitophel, the direct wish 'when he shall be judged, let him be condemned'. Perhaps most satisfactory of all from Dryden's point of view, to refer to the psalm would be to imply a further damning identification of Shaftesbury with evil; though commentators differed over the literal interpretation of the psalm, they were agreed that allegorically the chief enemy referred to was Judas; in the words of Grotius, '[Ecclesia] vocavitque hunc *Psalmum Iscarioticum*, quod in Achitophelum, ut credibile, scriptus esset, cui multa cum Iuda Iscariote communia . . .'.<sup>1</sup>

H. HAMMOND

#### AN EARLY POEM AND LETTER BY WORDSWORTH

WHILE they were living at Racedown, William and Dorothy Wordsworth exchanged visits with their neighbours the Pinneys of Blackdown, relatives of the Bristol merchant whose country house the Wordsworths occupied. After one of these meetings Joseph Gill, manager of the farm and brickyard at Racedown, noted in his diary: 'Jan. 1st. 1797. Mr. P(inney) of Blackdown to send Mr. Wordsworth's poem to "The Entertainer"'.<sup>2</sup> The magazine to which Wordsworth's poem was to be sent was *The Weekly Entertainer; or Agreeable and Instructive Repository. Containing A Collection of Select Pieces, Both in Prose and Verse; Curious Anecdotes, Instructive Tales, and Ingenious Essays on Different Subjects*—published at Sherborne, Dorset. In 1938 Professor de Selincourt noted that Dorothy had copied into a note-book now at Grasmere 'Passages from an address to Silence published in the *Weekly Entertainer*', but he assumed that her brother was not the author of the poem.<sup>3</sup> Recently, Miss Helen Darbishire has given us the text of the 'Address to Silence', which appeared in the *Weekly Entertainer* for 6 March 1797, and has shown that it is almost certainly by Wordsworth, though the signature, 'W. C.', suggested to her that Coleridge might have made some contribution to the work.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annotata ad Vetus Testamentum* (3 vols.: Paris, 1644), vol. i. Quoted in the *Critici Sacri* and Poole's *Synopsis*.

<sup>2</sup> Helen Darbishire, 'An Approach to Wordsworth's Genius', *English Studies Today* (ed. C. L. Wrenn and G. Bullough, Oxford, 1951), p. 150. The same entry had been quoted, without date and with the transcription slightly different, by Bergen Evans and Hester Pinney in 'Racedown and the Wordsworths', *R.E.S.* viii (1932), 17.

<sup>3</sup> *T.L.S.*, 12 Nov. 1938, p. 725.

<sup>4</sup> *English Studies Today*, pp. 149-52.

But Wordsworth had already appeared twice in the *Weekly Entertainer*, on 7 November 1796 (vol. xxviii, p. 377) with a letter to the editor, and on 21 November 1796 (*ibid.*, p. 419) with a poem entitled 'Address to the Ocean'. Neither of these items, apparently, has been noticed or reprinted since.

The reasons for believing that the 'Address to the Ocean' is by Wordsworth may be briefly given: parts of a rough draft of the poem and of a fair copy are to be found in a note-book at Dove Cottage, and there is the additional evidence of the signature 'W. W.' and of the reference to Coleridge in the printed text. The latter reads:

FOR THE WEEKLY ENTERTAINER

ADDRESS to the OCEAN.

'How long will ye round me be roaring',\*  
Once terrible waves of the sea?  
While I at my door sit deploring  
The treasure ye ravish'd from me.  
When shipwreck the white surf is strewing,  
This spray-beaten thatch will ye spare?  
Come—let us exult in the ruin  
Your smiles are put on to prepare.

Oh! thus that your voice had still thunder'd!  
Your arms for destruction been spread!  
My Charles and I ne'er had been sunder'd;  
But now had I pillow'd his head.  
The love which the waves must dissever,  
The hope which the winds might deceive,  
Why these, my sole stay, could I ever  
Permit him this bosom to leave?

Oh! where are thy beauties, my lover?  
And where is thy dark flowing hair?  
Oh God! that this storm would uncover  
Thy body that once was so fair!  
Thro' regions of darkness appalling  
It sunk as the hurricane whirl'd;  
By monsters beset in its falling,  
The brood of the bottomless world.

Then ocean! thou canst not uncover  
The body that once was so fair;  
And lost are thy beauties, my lover!  
And gone is thy dark-flowing hair!



Ye waters! I hear in your roaring  
 A voice from your deepest abode;  
 New victims in anger imploring—  
 My hope be the mercy of God.

W. W.

• From Mr. Coleridge.

The quotation from Coleridge in the first line is not to be considered merely a bit of advertising for 'The Complaint of Ninathoma', which had been published as one of the *Poems on Various Subjects* in the spring of 1796; rather, Wordsworth seems to be inviting a comparison between his own and Coleridge's treatment of related themes. Coleridge keeps close to his source in Ossian. His first stanza—

How long will ye round me be swelling,  
 O ye blue-tumbling waves of the sea?  
 Not always in caves was my dwelling,  
 Nor beneath the cold blast of the tree—

is no more than a verse paraphrase of the beginning of Ninathoma's lament in 'Berrathon': 'How long will ye roll around me, blue-tumbling waters of ocean? My dwelling was not always in caves, nor beneath the whistling tree.'<sup>1</sup> Coleridge leads us into the Celtic twilight of Ossian; Wordsworth, on the other hand, introduces the quotation in his first line mainly as a point of departure, away from Ossian and from Coleridge's poem, and, indeed, to call attention to that departure. He turns from the supernatural to the natural, from the mythical to the ordinary. His speaker is not an exiled Ossianic princess, dwelling in a northern cave and lamenting the cruelty of her false lover Uthal, but an English girl at her cottage door reminded by the raging storm of the loss at sea of her Charles. There is no suggestion of Ossian in Wordsworth's poem after the first line; the one memorable passage in an otherwise trite and unsuccessful composition owes nothing to 'Berrathon' but a great deal to *Lycidas*. It is easy to see why Wordsworth did not consider the 'Address to the Ocean' worthy of preservation; yet it is of some slight historical interest and, considered as a contrasting companion piece to 'The Complaint of Ninathoma', it may seem, in a way, representative of those tendencies of mind that were to draw Wordsworth in the preparation of *Lyrical Ballads* towards subjects 'chosen from ordinary life', whereas in Coleridge's great poem 'the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural'.

Two weeks before the publication of the 'Address to the Ocean', the following letter had appeared in the *Weekly Entertainer*:

<sup>1</sup> *The Works of Ossian, the Son of Fingal. In Two Volumes. Translated from the Gaelic Language by James Macpherson* (third edition, London, 1765), i. 364.

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SIR,

Racedown Lodge, October 23, 1796.

There having appeared in your *Entertainer* [vide the 255th page of the present vol.] an extract from a work purporting to be the production of Fletcher Christian, who headed the mutiny on board the *Bounty*, I think it proper to inform you, that I have the best authority for saying that this publication is spurious. Your regard for truth will induce you to apprise your readers of this circumstance.

I am, Sir,  
Your humble servant,  
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

Wordsworth was quite right; the excerpt was from a spurious volume entitled *Letters from Mr. Fletcher Christian containing a narrative of the Transactions on board His Majesty's Ship Bounty, Before and after the Mutiny, with his subsequent Voyages and Travels in South America*, published in London in 1796. The main contention in the book was indicated in the passage quoted in the *Weekly Entertainer*, that Captain Bligh was neither harsh nor inconsiderate toward his ship's company (indeed, few officers could 'produce stronger claims upon the gratitude and attachment of the men') and that they mutinied only that they might return to 'the enjoyments which Otaheite still held out to their voluptuous imaginations . . .'. Wordsworth's 'best authority' for believing that this was not written by Fletcher Christian might have been his own common sense; but, no doubt, he had other reasons. The Christians came from Cumberland, from near Cockermouth, Wordsworth's birthplace.<sup>1</sup> Fletcher Christian's elder brother Edward, who had been a Fellow of St. John's when Wordsworth first went up to Cambridge, was elected Professor of Common Law in 1788, and before June 1791 had been engaged to represent the interests of the Wordsworth family in their lawsuit against Lord Lonsdale, as Dorothy mentions in a letter of 26 June. Moreover, Edward Christian had already, before 1796, involved some members of the Wordsworth family in the public controversy over the reasons for the mutiny on the *Bounty*. In his 'Appendix' to the *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Court Martial held at Portsmouth* (London, 1794), he gave a list of gentlemen present when he questioned some of the captured mutineers about Captain Bligh's treatment of Fletcher Christian. Two of these witnesses to whom he refers the reader were the Rev. William Cookson, Canon of Windsor (Wordsworth's uncle), and Captain Wordsworth of the *Earl of Abergavenny* (his first

<sup>1</sup> In *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (compiled by J. A. Venn, Cambridge, 1944), part ii, vol. ii, p. 33, we are told that Edward Christian's address when he was admitted at Peterhouse in 1775 and at Gray's Inn in 1782 was Morland Close, Cumberland. Morland or Moorland Close is about a mile south-west of Cockermouth. Edward Christian had been baptized at Brigham, Cumberland, two miles west of Cockermouth, in 1758.

cousin).<sup>1</sup> When Wordsworth wrote his letter to the editor of the *Weekly Entertainer* he had returned to Racedown, perhaps quite recently, from a long visit to London. No doubt, a subject of conversation during the visit was the notorious escapade of Fletcher Christian, the mystery of his whereabouts, and the new book which purported to tell his story though it condemned its alleged author and vindicated his opponent. Probably half a dozen people in Wordsworth's range of acquaintance in 1796 could have given him 'the best authority for saying that this publication [was] spurious'.

J. R. MACGILLIVRAY

### A NEGLECTED EDITION OF ARNOLD'S *ST. PAUL AND PROTESTANTISM*

SINCE Matthew Arnold revised his essays frequently and in many cases substantially, references to his prose works are treacherous. For example, a reading of *God and the Bible* in the De Luxe Edition, which is ordinarily used for reference, gives a misleading picture of Arnold as a biblical critic, because he simplified or omitted so much of the subtle argumentation in this work when he was revising it for the Popular Edition of 1884. It is imperative therefore that the tools for the study of Arnold's essays be adequate and reliable. One of the most valuable of these tools is the late E. K. Brown's *Studies in the Text of Matthew Arnold's Prose Works* (Paris, 1935). Although Brown did not try to list all the minor changes in the text of Arnold's works from edition to edition, his study does provide a handy guide to substantial revisions.

Unfortunately it is a guide to follow with caution, as I had occasion to learn recently while working on *St. Paul and Protestantism*. Brown's account of the textual history of this work is badly garbled, and leads to a serious misunderstanding concerning the relative importance of the various editions. Brown leaves the impression that the second edition was little more than a reprint of the first, and that the only major changes were made in the two later editions. Such an estimate of the second edition is at variance with Arnold's own. In a letter to his mother dated 15 November 1870 Arnold said:

I have finished correcting the press of my *St. Paul and Protestantism* for the second edition. I shall send you the book, and I shall be glad you should have it in this second form, instead of in the first, for a good many things are brought out clearer, and the principal treatise is put directly after the preface, so that the

<sup>1</sup> William Bligh and Others, *A Book of the 'Bounty'* (London, Everyman's Library, 1938), p. 249.

book will no longer have the appearance of making that which was secondary—the part about the Dissenters—primary.<sup>1</sup>

*St. Paul and Protestantism* was first published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, the first two parts in October and November 1869, and the third part, the essay entitled 'Puritanism and the Church of England', in February 1870. Both the first and second editions in book form appeared in 1870, the third edition in 1875, and the Popular Edition in 1887. According to the letter quoted above, 'Puritanism and the Church of England', which had preceded the title essay in the first edition, was relegated to the back of the second edition so that it would not distract attention from the principal part of the book. But according to the same letter, the second edition contained other changes which made it superior in Arnold's opinion, and these changes E. K. Brown did not mention, because, as his footnotes show, he confused the first with the second edition.

In referring to the first edition Brown used the words, '*St. Paul and Protestantism* (edition of 1870)', ambiguously, of course, because there were two 1870 editions. But twice in the body of the text he mentioned the first edition, although his page-references are to the second edition.<sup>2</sup> Note 26 is especially curious. In the text it follows these words: 'To the first edition in book-form, was also added a bland reproach of his old enemy Baxter's taste in liturgical diction.' The reference is to *St. Paul and Protestantism* (edition of 1870), pages 136-8. Actually the passage about Baxter is on pages 138-9 of the second edition.

Of course, a re-reading of the sentence just quoted reveals that it is ambiguous. Possibly it means that a passage was added in the second edition, in which case the reference would be approximately correct. But this meaning implies that the passage was not in the first edition. Since the passage, word for word, is on pages 18-19 of the first edition, it becomes perfectly clear that Brown meant this sentence to refer to the first edition, but gave a second edition page-reference, although incorrectly.

This confusion of editions led Brown to state: 'A significant and attractive footnote was inserted in the first standard edition, anticipating a notorious contention of *Literature and Dogma*, to oppose "literary" to "mechanical" criteria of authorship, entirely to the advantage of the former.'<sup>3</sup> This note was not inserted till the second edition (p. 105); it was abbreviated in the third edition (pp. 105-6), and again in the Popular Edition (pp. 71-72).

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Matthew Arnold, 1848-1888*, ed. George W. E. Russell (New York, 1895), i. 51-52.

<sup>2</sup> See Brown, pp. 37-38, notes 25 and 26. Note 25 refers the reader to p. 168, which is correct for the second edition, but not for the first.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, pp. 34-35.

In three other instances Brown assigned to the third edition revisions actually introduced in the second. The first of these errors is in the matter of a footnote designed to convince Nonconformists that Arnold had no desire to make re-ordination a condition for admitting Dissenting ministers into the Church of England.<sup>1</sup> The text unqualified by this note is drastic enough to cause resentment. That Arnold should have added the mollifying note in 1870, not in 1875, is more in keeping with what we know of his sensitivity to current comments.

In the second of these errors, Brown assigned to the 1875 edition a footnote explaining 'the brutal humour of the Dean of Ripon's famous similitude of the two lepers'. In Brown's opinion, by 1875 the Dean's letter to *The Times* (26 October 1869) about Dr. Pusey and Dr. Temple was so nearly forgotten that it required explanation. But the explanation was added to the second edition of 1870 (p. ix).

Lastly, according to Brown: 'Taking issue with an oracular conclusion of Renan Arnold had claimed, without racial, national, or geographical qualification, that the reign of St. Paul was becoming more and more effective. The third edition introduces the wise reservation "in our own country at any rate".'<sup>2</sup> This qualification was, however, introduced in the second edition of 1870 (p. 4), a slight matter but a sign that Arnold was less naïve about continental religion and scholarship in 1870 than the bald generalization of the first edition would otherwise indicate.

One other error in Brown's study deserves mention. Brown wrote: 'In the third edition, Matthew Arnold also abandoned, sadly, one supposes, but wisely for the reputation of his social insight, a sanguine prophecy that the Athanasian Creed and the Thirty-Nine Articles would disappear from the Prayer-Book in the lifetime of his generation.'<sup>3</sup> This optimistic prophecy, however, is in the third edition (p. 176) exactly as it was first written for the *Cornhill Magazine* [xxi (February 1870), p. 201]. It was not omitted till the Popular Edition of 1887.<sup>4</sup>

This fact has some bearing on the history of *Literature and Dogma*, the first instalment of which appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* in July 1871, less than a year after Arnold published the second edition of *St. Paul and Protestantism*. Professor William Blackburn has advanced the theory that *Literature and Dogma* was diverted from its original design into the form which we know today, mainly because Arnold foresaw the victory of the conservative High Church party in the Athanasian Creed controversy.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Second edition, pp. xxiv-xxv.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, pp. 36-37.

<sup>3</sup> Brown, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> The context from which the prophecy was deleted is on p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> See 'The Background of Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*', *M.P.*, xliii (1945), 130-9.



In 1870 the Archbishop of Canterbury, A. C. Tait, had recommended that this Creed, with its threat of damnation for the heterodox, be dropped from the ritual of the Church of England. In this project Tait was aided by Dean Stanley, Arnold's old friend. The High Churchmen and the Ritualists, led by E. B. Pusey, H. P. Liddon, and J. W. Burgon, vigorously opposed this recommendation, and their conservative position was upheld by a decision of Convocation in May 1873.

According to Blackburn, Arnold foresaw this decision and his agitation decisively affected the composition of *Literature and Dogma*. But it is improbable that Arnold had lost hope for Dean Stanley's position as early as 1873. For example, writing about 'Church Prospects' in the *Contemporary Review* for January 1875, the Rev. J. Llewellyn Davies was quite confident that within a year Archbishop Tait and his supporters would force some change in the status of the Athanasian Creed (vol. xxv, 246-9). Furthermore, at a synod of the Church of Ireland during April and May 1875, there was a bitter struggle over the Creed, and only the strong opposition of Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, prevented the mutilation of the text in the Prayer Book. The text was preserved, but by a resolution passed on 4 May 1876 the rubric directing its public use was struck out.<sup>1</sup> The Liberal position, therefore, was not by any means lost in the 1870s. If anything, it was growing stronger.

Now when we remember how closely Arnold followed church affairs, when we note the care with which he revised the texts of his works to keep them up to date, and when we observe that in the 1875 edition of *St. Paul and Protestantism* he did not delete his sanguine prediction about the Athanasian Creed, we may infer that he was not as agitated and apprehensive in 1873 as Blackburn has pictured him.

In this note I have not attempted a collation of texts, nor have I checked Brown's book for errors of omission, but rather I have simply noted a few errors in it, with the intention of warning Arnold students against facile reliance on it as an authority. Victorian scholars need, and need badly, a good edition of Arnold's prose works, with variant readings noted and dated accurately. As matters stand, no one can speak with confidence of Arnold's intellectual progress in any respect, unless he has first checked every edition of the work he is quoting.

FRANCIS G. TOWNSEND

<sup>1</sup> *Richard Chenevix Trench, Archbishop: Letters and Memorials*, ed. Mary Trench (London, 1888). See vol. ii, pp. 171-96, for an account of Trench's fight to preserve the integrity of the Athanasian Creed.



## REVIEWS

**Anglo-Saxon Magic and Medicine. Illustrated specially from the Semi-Pagan Text 'Lacnunga'.** By J. H. G. GRATTAN and CHARLES SINGER. Pp. xii+234. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, for the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum, 1952. 28s. net.

This is a handsome book, profusely illustrated, and pretty certainly published at an uneconomic price, thanks to the enlightened support of the Wellcome Foundation. It is also very useful to have an edition of a text unpublished since Volume I of Cockayne's *Leechdoms* appeared in 1866.

The work falls into two parts: (1) a general survey of magico-medical practice in Anglo-Saxon England, mainly by Professor Singer; and (2) an edition, with translation, of *Lacnunga*, mainly by Professor Grattan.

Grattan died in October 1951, aged seventy-three. He was able to revise the page-proofs of the General Survey, and of the text and translation of *Lacnunga*, as well as the notes, but had no direct part in the final revision. It had originally been intended to have a glossary of plant names: when this idea was dropped, references to it should have been cut out. Unfortunately some references have escaped revision (e.g. pp. 119, n. 2; 179, n. 2; 156, note on l. 55).

One can hardly expect to challenge the main thesis of Professor Singer's General Survey, but there are some points of detail to which attention might be drawn. For example, the argument based on the Sutton Hoo cenotaph (pp. 7-8) stands or falls on the assumption that this is Anglo-Saxon in origin: such an identification not all Scandinavian scholars will allow. Again, there are several references (e.g. p. 6, fig. 2; p. 21, notes on fig. 9; p. 40, l. 5; p. 55, l. 8) to 'the Cædmon MS., written probably at Winchester'. This is rather old-fashioned terminology; the 'Cædmon MS.'—i.e. MS. Junius XI—is now generally assumed to belong to Canterbury, and the illustrations and handwriting to belong to the 'Winchester School', which Dr. F. Wormald has argued (in *Archæologia*, xci, 1945) does not denote a style localized at Winchester, but one common to the reformed English monasteries of the tenth and eleventh centuries, including those of Winchester. Professor Singer discusses at some length, in his section on 'Semantics of Anglo-Saxon Plant-Names', the great difficulty—almost the impossibility—of equating Anglo-Saxon plant-names with names in Latin originals. This, with certain exceptions, is true, and Singer is right to warn us to be 'very wary of the philologist's equations of *things*, as distinct from his equations of *words*'. But it is not unworthy of notice that English herbals, from *Lacnunga* to Gerard, remain remarkably faithful in their nomenclature for English plants known to them; the recent publication of Middle English texts of *Macer Floridus* and *Agnus Castus* gives one further opportunity for testing this, and for assuming an unbroken tradition of herbal writings throughout the Middle Ages.

The translation is on the whole accurate: the notes that follow are not made in a mood of carping criticism. On p. 99, V a is not quite accurately translated;

a line has dropped out of the translation after p. 155, l. 9; on p. 193, l. 8, for *human* read *woman's*; the order of translation is varied on p. 160, ll. 20-21; and there is wrong division of words on pp. 102, l. 11; 110, l. 23. In connexion with no. CLVIII c, one would have expected a reference to the Old English *Elene*: and one would like an explanation of the translation 'nine slices' for *nygan penegas* (pp. 102-3). The rendering of *fic* (p. 102, l. 20, and n. 8) as 'haemorrhoids' takes one's mind back to the somewhat tentative interpretation of King Alfred's mysterious disease, called *ficus*, by W. H. Stevenson in his edition (1904) of Asser.

A. MACDONALD

**Marlowe and the Early Shakespeare. The Clark Lectures, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1951.** By F. P. WILSON. Pp. viii+144. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953. 12s. 6d. net.

The central theme of these Clark lectures is expressed in the sentence: 'To think of [Marlowe] as a non-dramatic poet forced by the circumstances of his time into writing dramatic poetry alien to the true nature of his genius is seriously to underestimate his dramatic gifts.' Professor Wilson finds this genius manifested both in a command of dramatic form for which Marlowe is not always given due credit, and in an insight to write passages which use rhythm and language to lay bare character in a manner genuinely theatrical.

When he discusses the organization of *Tamburlaine*, its contrasts and management of suspense, or Barabas's speeches, with their variations in pace and their firm internal directions to the actor, the criteria applied are those which might come naturally to any modern reader fortunate enough to possess Professor Wilson's critical insight. In other phases of his defence of Marlowe—for that is what this book essentially is—the writer is obliged to use methods more characteristic of the professional literary historian. He prepares the reader's mind for the introduction of these by emphasizing the poverty or restricted range of the pre-Marlovian drama; he then argues that the monotone of *Tamburlaine* may be justified by a theory of decorum—an elevated theme demands a perpetually elevated note; or that we ought not to apply anachronistic standards of naturalism to the inconsistencies of character in Mortimer and Isabel—Marlowe changed them into adulterous conspirators in order to add pity and terror to Edward's fate. As a third line of defence, the textual degradation of much in the canon is put in evidence: the greatness of *Doctor Faustus* survives its botcher, and *The Massacre at Paris* remains interesting in spite of the reporter's ineptitude.

The defence, which is conducted with unobtrusive skill, is illuminating enough to make idle the complaint, from whatever orthodoxy it may proceed, that its grounds are shifted too frequently. In some measure it is unfair to the book even to call attention to these variations in the approach to the subject; for it is only occasionally that a reader may feel that the criteria change rather abruptly, and that the method does not allow sufficient scope to Professor Wilson's powers either as literary interpreter or as scholar and historian. To read Marlowe, of all dramatists, properly, we need both the good sense of the common reader and

the help provided by the scholar. By writing in a spirit uncorrupted by literary prejudices or the 'dogmatism of learning' Professor Wilson has done good service to Marlowe studies, which have in the hands of some recent writers tended to become rather dismally alerted to the controversy about the degree of the atheist graduate's self-identification with his heroes. Here, the arguments are reviewed temperately; we could wish, perhaps, that they had been dismissed more firmly. And if there is a complaint to be made against these four chapters it is that we could have spared the section on Marlowe as a student at Cambridge and a roaring-boy in London as well as the four pages summarizing Sir Walter Greg's work on the text of *Doctor Faustus*—double the space allowed to Faustus's last soliloquy, in a book whose proclaimed concern is with Marlowe the dramatic poet. Instead, one would rather have had more of Professor Wilson's own observations: something on *Dido*, for example, where the Queen's speech at iv. iv. 93, which is surely not by Nashe, so strikingly anticipates all those qualities of genuinely dramatic poetry which Professor Wilson finds in Barabas's lines in the counting-house. On *The Jew of Malta*, too, one would have liked a fuller discussion of why it is so 'revolting to sense and sensibility' to suppose that Marlowe may have written the whole play.

In his fifth and last chapter, on Shakespeare, Professor Wilson delivers what may well be a death-blow to the old view, long ago severely battered by W. D. Briggs, that a number of popular plays on English history was written before 1588. The idea that after the Armada, amid renewed domestic broils, dramatic censorship may have been relaxed to 'permit a choice of subject that encouraged national unity' is more credible in the light of national psychology than an older opinion, which rested on the notion that the plays were partly the result of an outburst of patriotic feeling consequent upon the victory over Spain; but it seems to imply a kind of awareness rather unlikely on the part of the censorship. Still, there are plenty of other reasons—amongst which Dr. Tillyard has pointed to the appearance of the Holinshed of 1587—which may account for the timing of the decade or more of English history plays. If Professor Wilson is right, a major reason may be that it needed a Shakespeare, if not to invent the kind (for must not Bale still be given what credit he can get for that?), at least in *Henry VI* to give it a form imitable by the Peeles and Lodges. Professor Wilson was, of course, writing before the appearance of the New Cambridge edition of *Henry VI*, but, although they work entirely against this part of his thesis, it is doubtful if he would have found much in those volumes to cause him to modify it.

Professor Wilson also reviews the controversy about *The Troublesome Reign* and *King John*; he comes to no conclusion, but it is not perfectly clear why he should say that, if it were shown to be the case that *King John* was written by 1590, we should have completely to revise our ideas about Shakespeare's relationship to Marlowe. Does this mean simply that we should have to think again about the incidence of Shakespeare's maturity relative to Marlowe's, or that *Edward II* would be robbed of some of the significance attaching to its priority in the line that issues in *Richard II*? I cannot see that the earliest possible date for *King John* would make much difference to the links between *Edward II* and *Richard II*, so far as they have been established, not to mention those between *Edward II* and

*Henry VI* Parts 2 and 3; but Professor Wilson may not be thinking of this, and he pays, in fact, disappointingly little attention to this famous example of interaction between the two dramatists.

In the last part of this chapter some of the radical differences between Marlowe and Shakespeare are very fairly and acutely described. Professor Wilson composes his picture with invariable grace and accuracy; any page of his clear and vigorous writing might serve as a model of how these things should be done. As a compact and balanced account of a great subject, this is a book which will serve many purposes.

PETER URE

**The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher.** By EUGENE M.

WAITH. Pp. xiv+214 (Yale Studies in English, 120). New Haven: Yale University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1952. \$4.00; 25s. net.

What Professor Waith calls a pattern is the aggregate of various characteristic features of the Beaumont and Fletcher tragi-comedies, most of them readily recognized by previous critics; these features, he holds, the dramatists gradually learned to manipulate, and in *A King and No King* achieved for the first time their new form of dramatic entertainment, with its emphasis upon the formal pattern to which everything else is subordinated.

Much of this book is concerned with the origins of this pattern and method, not with the discovery of sources for particular plays. Mr. Waith, however, is at his most convincing when he can point to a specific source which also served as a model for the tragi-comic style in plays not directly influenced by it. Thus he shows that the *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* of Seneca the Elder gave Fletcher material for the plots of three, perhaps four, plays; his most valuable chapters, therefore, are those in which the Senecan art of declamation, where the orator's duty was to gain the applause of an audience rather than the goodwill of a jury, is correlated with the rhetorical ingenuities of tragi-comedy. The chapter on 'The Poet as Orator' is a good piece of literary analysis, and the distinctions that Mr. Waith draws between the rhetorical styles of Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger are likely to be useful in several ways to future editors.

Elsewhere, the writer is obliged to be less precise in his identifications, and his argument, though always suggestive, inclines to be cumbrous and roundabout. In the chapter on 'Satyr and Shepherd' Mr. Waith starts with Guarini and ends with *As You Like It*, but the intermediate stages may fairly be described as obscure; they deal with the well-known satyr-satire tangle, pastoral drama and the satirical commentator in the drama. The satyr (or the satirical dramatist) handles antitheses of virtue and vice, rails at beasts from under a beastly vizard, and sometimes (as in *The Malcontent*) assumes a role whose evil aspect is more apparent than real. These maskings and antitheses are in some measure adopted by Beaumont and Fletcher, and, interpenetrated by their romance plots and atmosphere, issue in those mere 'aggregations without unity' (Coleridge's phrase) who are the heroes and heroines of Fletcherian tragi-comedy: 'Arbaces, who seems evil, but is not so, who often appears as his own opposite, who is a blend

of utterly incongruous qualities, and who is in all things extreme, is both satyr and shepherd' (p. 84). Mr. Waith shifts his ground so frequently in this chapter that it is far from clear how he arrives at his proof and difficult to do justice to his argument; his readers would, I think, have found the pages on the same subject published by him in 1943 helpful (*R.E.S.*, xix. 146-53), and it is a puzzle why they—or a development of them—should have been omitted here, for they seem to form an essential part of the case.

Three chapters are occupied with analyses of selected plays. In the first of these the emergence of the pattern is traced; in the second, which could have been dispensed with, Mr. Waith reviews rather summarily a large selection of comedies, tragedies, and histories, and in the third deals at more length with the 'mature tragi-comedies' of Fletcher: these are *The Mad Lover*, *The Loyal Subject*, *The Humorous Lieutenant*, *Women Pleased*, *The Island Princess*, and *A Wife for a Month*. If it is surprising to find these plays given such prominence, Mr. Waith amply justifies his choice by showing the completeness with which they illustrate the middle kind that Fletcher perfected. It is difficult to be too hard on Fletcher, and the competence of his critics is largely to be measured by the sharpness with which they diagnose his defects. Mr. Waith passes this test with honours and, although the sacred word is mentioned once or twice, he is far from sheltering Fletcher behind the baroque. Throughout he rightly does not worry too much about problems of dating and attribution which would have been out of place in such a study as this. That he preserves an air of tolerance in the face of so much that is (as Mr. Danby showed) rather frighteningly relevant to the social and political history of the period may be due to the fact that he remains in some way disengaged from the sadness of it all; for another reader, no demonstration, however skilful, that Beaumont and Fletcher meant to do exactly what they did do will quite console him for the long day's dying of the Shakespearean stage.

PETER URE

**John Donne. The Divine Poems.** Edited with Introduction and Commentary by HELEN GARDNER. Pp. xcvi+147. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. 25s. net.

This is undoubtedly the most important contribution to the study of Donne's poetry since the publication of Sir Herbert Grierson's great edition in 1912. It will enable all careful students to see both Donne and his poetry more clearly and truly than they did before, and it should compel them (as it has compelled the present reviewer) seriously to modify their estimates, both of his religious poetry and of his theological position.

Miss Gardner begins her General Introduction with a survey of Donne's religious poetry as a whole. She rightly insists that at no period of Donne's life is there trace of anything that can be regarded as a religious or moral crisis, and in her remarks on 'A Litany' (which it seems strange that she should regard as 'less successful' than the *La Corona* sonnets) she observes that the sins from which Donne asks deliverance can all be referred back to two general philosophic conceptions: the conception of virtue as the mean between two extremes, and the



related conception of virtue as the proper use of all the faculties. Donne anticipates here that ideal of 'reasonable piety' which is so familiar later in the century in the manuals of the Caroline divines (p. xxvii). Here, as often elsewhere, Miss Gardner rightly (and I think originally) insists on the affinity between Donne and Hooker, and on the wholeheartedness of his acceptance of the Anglican *via media*. In her general estimate of the 'Divine Poems' she tends, perhaps, to overpraise their style and, in comparison with the *Songs and Sonets*, to exaggerate their 'conventionality': this, however, is a matter which there is no space to discuss.

It is the second part of her General Introduction, on the date, order, and interpretation of the 'Holy Sonnets', which is most revolutionary and, as the Germans say, *bahnbrechend*. On the authority of Walton, of Gosse, and of Grierson, it has been accepted without further investigation that Donne wrote all the 'Holy Sonnets' after the death of his wife and all of them at about the same time: an excellent example, no doubt, of that habit of flocking in droves and trooping in companies which, as A. E. Housman once observed, mankind shares with sheep. As the result of a careful examination of the manuscripts and printed texts, Miss Gardner has demonstrated that we are really dealing with three (or rather, perhaps, with four) groups of sonnets, written at different times. (1) The twelve sonnets contained in manuscript groups I and II and printed in the same order in 1633, which consist of (a) a prayer followed by five meditations on death and judgement (the Last Things); (b) six sonnets which Miss Gardner describes as treating of God's love of Man and the love Man owes to God and to his neighbour, but which it is perhaps difficult to classify thematically. According to Miss Gardner's classification, the fifth sonnet (first group), 'If poysonous mineralls, and if that tree', is a sonnet on death, while the ninth sonnet (second group), 'What if this present were the worlds last night?', is a sonnet on God's love: nevertheless, are not both themes equally present in each sonnet—or rather, is not each sonnet concerned with the twofold theme of the love which alone can save us from eternal death? (2) Four sonnets which all but two of the group III manuscripts interpolate among eight of the original twelve. Miss Gardner declares that they are related by their common emphasis on sin and tears for sin, although it is perhaps difficult to perceive any very clear and obvious difference between them and the last six of the original twelve. For example, in the tenth of the original twelve, 'Batter my heart', Donne begs God to 'breake, blowe, burn and make me new', and in the second of the second group, 'I am a little world made cunningly', he asks to be burnt with a fiery zeal for God and His house. Again, in both the ninth of the original twelve, 'What if this present were the worlds last night?', and in the third of the second group, 'O might those sighes and teares returne againe', Donne recalls the days of what he describes as 'my idolatrie': in the first, it is true, in order to remind himself that beauty is a sign of pity, in the second in order to remind himself that, even in the days of that sinfulness for which he is now being punished, he suffered more pain than pleasure. Miss Gardner has rightly (and, one might almost say, pioneeringly) insisted on Donne's indebtedness to the tradition of the religious Meditation: nevertheless, his sonnets still remain so personal that it is perhaps easier to classify them according to phrases and images than according to clearly



distinguishable themes. (3) The three sonnets in the Westmoreland manuscript, which are entirely unrelated to one another and which owe nothing to the tradition of the formal Meditation.

Miss Gardner adduces almost irrefutable evidence for believing that the first six sonnets of the first group, those dealing with the Last Things, were composed during the earlier part of 1609. This evidence may be summarized according to what seem to the reviewer its degrees of convincingness. (1) In his elegy on Cecilia Bulstrode, who died at Lady Bedford's house on 4 August 1609, Donne wrote:

Death I recant, and say, unsaid by mee  
What ere hath slip'd, that might diminish thee.

Chambers, in his edition of 1896, rightly remarked that this was a palinode for Donne's bold defiance of death in the sonnet 'Death be not proud'; but this suggestion was disregarded, for in the following year Gosse published the three sonnets from the Westmoreland manuscript, and his assumption that they proved all the 'Holy Sonnets' to have been written after 1617 was generally accepted. Moreover, in the 1635 edition of Donne's Poems this elegy is followed by one, not by Donne, but possibly by Lady Bedford, to whom it is ascribed in two manuscripts, beginning

Death be not proud, thy hand gave not this blow.

'Both Donne's palinode and the unknown elegist's retort would be apposite only if Donne had fairly recently written his defiance of death.' (2) It would seem that it was not until the latter half of 1609, when he was writing *Pseudo-Martyr*, that Donne definitely and finally decided between two possible doctrines about the fate of the soul after death: did it (as the 'Psychopannychists' held) sleep until the Last Judgement, when it was reunited with the body? Or did it proceed to an immediate and personal judgement in Heaven? Donne, in 1609, seems to have decided once and for all in favour of the latter view, which occupies a central place in the *Second Anniversary* (1612) and to which he frequently recurs in his sermons. In these sonnets, however, his language on the subject is very imprecise, and he seems to have regarded the choice between the two possible doctrines as a matter of comparative indifference. In the fourth sonnet ('At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow') souls are called upon to 'arise from death'; in the sixth ('Death be not proud') the penultimate line,

One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,

suggests that the soul sleeps like the body; and in the third ('This is my playes last scene') he originally wrote

and I shall sleepe a space,  
Or presently, I know not, see that Face,

a passage which later he rather clumsily emended into conformity with his later view, excluding the psychopannychist alternative. (3) Among the verse-letters in 1633 is a sonnet 'To E. of D. with six holy Sonnets', declaring that the poems were begotten by the lord's own rhymes, that there should have been seven of

them, but that 'the seaventh hath still some maim'. Grosart placed this sonnet before the *La Corona* group, and in so doing he was followed by Grierson. Miss Gardner agrees with Grierson in believing that the lord was the third Earl of Dorset, who succeeded to the title in February 1609, two days after marrying the Earl of Bedford's niece, Lady Anne Clifford, but she disagrees both with Grosart and with Grierson in their assumption that this sonnet accompanied a gift of the *La Corona* sonnets: (a) because the 'Hymns' accompanying the letter and the sonnet which Donne sent to Mrs. Herbert in July 1607 were almost certainly, although Walton declared that they were 'now lost to us', the *La Corona* sonnets, which it is difficult to suppose that Donne later sent to the Earl of Dorset, declaring that he had inspired them; (b) because the six sonnets on the Last Things did require a seventh, a concluding meditation on the joys of Heaven. I must admit that I do not find these arguments convincing, and that such evidence as we have inclines me to believe that Grosart and Grierson were right in assuming that the sonnet 'To E. of D.' accompanied a gift of the first six of the *La Corona* sonnets. (a) Donne says:

I send as yet

But six, they say, the seaventh hath still some maim.

This, if it means anything, must mean that Donne had written a seventh sonnet, but that his friends ('they') were not satisfied with it. Had Donne felt that a seventh sonnet was really necessary, it is hard to suppose that he should have destroyed his original version instead of working at it until it satisfied both him and 'them'. (b) The *La Corona* sonnets do number seven, and, even though we may be unable to perceive any 'maim' in the seventh, 'Ascension', what we have may well be a revised version of Donne's original draft. (c) It seems unwise to rest any hypothesis about the doings of the pre-ordained Donne upon appeals to probability and on present-day notions of what would be fit or proper or reasonable in a given situation, and it is surely impossible to decide, except within very wide limits, what this Donne would or would not have been capable of. Which, after all, is the more painful to our modern sensibilities: the possibility that Donne may have sent 'To E. of D.' in 1609, pretending that His Grace's muse had inspired them, six of the sonnets he had already sent to Mrs. Herbert in 1607; the possibility that he pretended that His Grace's muse had inspired the far more personal and deeply felt sonnets on the Last Things; or the certainty that in 1613 he addressed the Earl of Somerset as 'a person, whom God had made so great an instrument of his providence in this Kingdome'? Whether or no Donne numbered these cringings and insincere flatteries (which his dependence on patronage compelled him to practise) among his 'sins', there can be no doubt that to us they are the most embarrassing of all the facts we know about him. He had never been a mere worldling, and, at any rate from the beginning of his friendship with Mrs. Herbert, his worldliness somehow coexisted with a profound religiousness: nevertheless, Walton may well have been right in suggesting that it was not until after his wife's death in 1617 that he became finally 'crucified to the world'. Let us frankly accept the paradoxes and the contradictions: they do but accentuate the grandeur and the drama of that gradual transformation, *instinctu et*

*impulsu spiritus sancti*. The sonnet 'To E. of D.' should be discarded as a weak link from the argument (quite strong enough to dispense with it) in favour of 1609 as the date for the six sonnets on the Last Things.

Miss Gardner concludes her General Introduction with some most illuminating (and, for the most part, original) observations on the indebtedness of Donne's 'Holy Sonnets' to the tradition of the religious Meditation. Here, as elsewhere, she reveals, perhaps, some tendency to interpret both the *Divine Poems* and the *Songs and Sonnets* too autobiographically, and to assume that because Donne convincingly describes despair he was therefore *in* despair; nevertheless, such a passage as the following is a most valuable contribution to an understanding of the 'Holy Sonnets': St. Ignatius recommends the exercitant to assist his imaginative realization by means of familiar examples or 'congruous thoughts'—to think, for example, of a knight in the presence of his king whom he has grievously and ungratefully offended.

Donne's pilgrim, who has done treason abroad, and his thief, who on the way to execution longs for the prison from which he had wished to be delivered, are excellent examples of 'congruous thoughts'. These brief, vivid, realistic images from human life are very characteristic of the 'Holy Sonnets', which show none of that elaboration of a simile or an analogy into a conceit which is characteristic of the *Songs and Sonnets*. (p. lii.)

Of the Textual Introduction there is no space to speak in detail. Suffice it to say that Miss Gardner gives sound and sufficient reasons for the fact that in her *apparatus criticus* she has, with certain exceptions, not referred to the various manuscripts individually, but to the groups into which they can be arranged. The manuscripts of what she calls group I contain no poems which can be dated with certainty after Donne's ordination in 1615, and were probably derived from a collection which Donne had made in 1614, when, as we know from a letter to Goodyer, he contemplated publishing his poems. The manuscripts of group II, which contain the Hamilton elegy, derive from a common source, which must have been put together after 1625, probably by someone who had access to Donne's own papers. The manuscripts of group III do not seem to derive from any single collection, and were probably made by various lovers of poetry who had obtained copies of poems which Donne had given to friends. They contain many spurious poems, but they sometimes preserve earlier versions of poems found in a revised form in groups I and II. The Westmoreland manuscript, which stands by itself, probably belonged to Rowland Woodward. In its text of the 'Holy Sonnets' it contains, besides the three sonnets not found elsewhere, a few authentic revisions peculiar to itself. Miss Gardner has based her text on the edition of 1633, whose text, she rightly declares, where it derives from a group I manuscript, is better than that of any single surviving manuscript and better than we could construct from all the manuscripts; and, for poems there first printed, on the edition of 1635; and she has corrected the printed text only when the weight of manuscript authority is against it.

Miss Gardner's text is, on the whole, decidedly better than Grierson's. The most extensive single readjustment that must be made by those who are

accustomed to quote from memory is in the 'Hymne to God the Father', for Miss Gardner has convincingly demonstrated that, where the text of 1633 and Walton's *Life* (which most of us had unthinkingly accepted) differs from that of the manuscripts (which Grierson printed as an alternative version, with the manuscript title 'To Christ'), its variants must be regarded as corruptions. One may not always agree with the reading she has adopted, but, in places where the true reading was not immediately apparent, she has invariably given careful reasons for her choice. If she has any bias it is, perhaps, slightly towards conservatism: for example, in *La Corona*, 'Resurrection', l. 8, where 1633 and groups I and II read 'little Booke' and groups III and *W* read 'life-booke', she would have been justified in accepting her own emendation 'title-booke' into the text; for, while it is inconceivable that Donne should have substituted 'little booke' for his earlier 'life-booke', it is entirely conceivable (in my opinion, certain) that 'lit(t)le' is a misreading of 'title'. Since space will only permit of a very brief consideration of particular textual problems, it will perhaps be best to confine ourselves to the Sonnets, where textual and metrical problems may be considered together.

The difficulty with Donne's Sonnets, or with many passages in them, is that they present a combination of bold, deliberate, and often triumphantly successful metrical innovation and of what (although Miss Gardner would probably disagree with me) I cannot but regard as astonishing metrical incompetence: true though it be that only a very careful study can enable one to decide with confidence which is which. Many of the transcribers of Donne's Sonnets decided far too confidently and superficially which was which, and many readings both in the manuscripts and in the printed texts must be rejected as unauthentic sophistications and conventionalizations. In her endeavour to understand and appreciate the unconventional effects Donne was trying to achieve, Miss Gardner has revealed admirable patience and sensibility; sometimes, however, she tends to be too much of what I may call a whole-hogger, too unwilling to admit the existence of certain astonishing examples of metrical incompetence, which, unless (as Dryden's *Zimri* once remarked) we are able to digest iron as an ostrich can, no ingenuity can or should persuade us to accept as good English verse. Such lines I am inclined to describe as 'Wyattisms', for they bear, with their spavined metre and unnatural accentuation, a close resemblance to many lines in Wyatt's Sonnets, lines of which the only satisfactory defence and explanation would seem to be that Wyatt had not yet learnt to do better. It is true that there are plenty of such lines in Donne's Satires, but there Donne, like some other Elizabethan satirists, was deliberately trying to achieve in English that jaw-breaking 'harshness' which he had been taught to find in the Roman satirical hexameter. The Wyattisms in his sonnets I cannot profess to explain (was he, now and then, afflicted with a kind of metrical black-out?); but some of his innovations are defensible. He has, as Miss Gardner perceives, a fondness for laying the strongest possible emphasis on pronouns. As good an example as any is the first line of the sonnet on his wife's death:

Since *she* whome *I* lov'd, hath payd *her* last debt.

Here, if the pronouns are italicized, any reader can immediately read the line as

Donne intended it to be read. In the sixth line of the sixth *La Corona* sonnet ('Resurrection') we have:

Shall controule  
Death, whom *thy* death slue; nor shall to mee.

The revision of this line in the group II manuscripts is clearly a sophistication by someone who, failing to accentuate 'thy', assumed that the metre was defective, and tried to mend it by inserting an extra syllable ('now') after 'shall':

Death, whom *thy death* slue; nor shall nowe to me.

In the twelfth of the first group of 'Holy Sonnets' ('Father, part of his double interest') group I and *W* read (correctly), l. 4,

*Hee* keepes and gives *mee* his deaths conquest;

and l. 11,

*None* doth, but all-healing grace and Spirit.

Here 1633 has accepted the emendations of someone who, through failing to accentuate 'Hee' and 'None', tried to mend what seemed to him defective metre by inserting extra syllables:

*Hee* keepes, and gives to mee his deaths conquest;

and

*None* doth, but thy all-healing grace and Spirit.

Here, though, I think the rhyme 'yet—Spirit' can only be regarded as a Wyattism, as also, perhaps, the accentuation of 'conquest'. In her note on 'Batter my heart' (p. 71), rightly defending 'lov'd' in l. 9,

Yet dearely I love you, and would *be* lov'd faine,

against the consensus 'lovèd', Miss Gardner remarks that it seems extremely unlikely that 'in this powerful and colloquial sonnet Donne would use the poetical and archaic form "lovèd"': nevertheless, in 'conquest' I suspect that Donne *is* being 'archaic and poetical': even in Spenser 'conquest' occurs only once (*Colin Clout*, l. 951); in all other places Spenser accentuates it on the first syllable, and Shakespeare does so invariably. And there are other places where the 'archaic and poetical' is incongruously mingled with the 'powerful and colloquial': what could be more Wyattish than ll. 5-8 of the second of the first twelve 'Holy Sonnets' ('Oh my blacke Soule!'):

Or like a thiefe, which till deaths doome be read,  
Wisheth himselfe deliverèd from prison;  
But damn'd and hal'd to execution,  
Wisheth that still he might be imprisonèd.

Occasionally, freed from editorial responsibility, I have been tempted to 'frolic in conjecture'.

This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint  
My pilgrimages last mile; and my race  
Idly, yet quickly runne, hath this last pace,  
My spans last inch, my minutes last point.

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Even although the weight of manuscript authority is in favour of 'last' in the fourth line, and although the 'latest' of 1633 and group III may well be a sophistication, the line as it stands cannot be regarded as other than execrably bad. And I do not feel happy about 'this' in l. 3: what exactly does Donne mean? 'This last pace, which is my span's last inch and my minute's last point'? One is almost tempted to suppose that the true reading should be something like:

and my race  
Idly, yet quickly runne, hath his last pace,  
My span his last inch, my minute his last point.

In the concluding couplet of the first of the 'Holy Sonnets' ('As due by many titles I resigne'):

That thou lov'st mankind well, yet wilt not chuse me,  
And Satan hates mee, yet is loth to lose mee,

Miss Gardner has been, I think, misled, partly by the contraction mark after 'wilt' in 1633 (for which, as she admits, there is no manuscript authority) and partly by that love of accentuating pronouns which Donne displays elsewhere, into supposing that the first line has ten syllables and that 'me' should be accentuated as strongly as 'chuse'. I feel certain, however, that Donne intended each line to have eleven syllables and that 'chuse me', like 'lose me', is to be scanned as a normal feminine rhyme. Miss Gardner admits that, if the line is scanned as she would have it, there is 'a peculiar lack of tact': why, though, try to represent Donne's metre as even worse than it is? Since Miss Gardner has not made it a rule to follow 1633 obstinately and automatically through thick and thin, it is difficult to see why she should have followed it here, and, by retaining, against the manuscript consensus, its unhappy contraction mark, have made what I can only regard as much ado about nothing. Important as are the contraction marks in 1633, they have tended, perhaps, to become objects of superstition. In 'Batter my heart', l. 9, the contraction mark before 'and', which Miss Gardner rightly replaces by a comma, may itself be a misplaced comma.

Would that it were possible to devote the space they deserve to the Commentary and the Appendixes, packed as they are with original discoveries and new and important interpretations! Miss Gardner has recorded how, when she was beginning her work, the late Dr. F. E. Hutchinson urged her to comment as fully as possible. Even so, there remain a few places where still further illumination would have been desirable: (1) An interesting resemblance in imagery and phrasing between ll. 5-9 of 'I am a little world made cunningly' and the last stanza of 'A Valediction: of weeping' might have been noticed. (2) In the commentary on 'The Crosse' much early precedent for the perception of crosses and cross-like figures throughout the visible world might have been quoted: cf. Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ed. Bury, ii. 299, note 29: 'The Christian writers, Justin, Minucius Felix, Tertullian, Jerome, and Maximus of Turin, have investigated with tolerable success the figure or likeness of a cross in almost every object of nature or art; in the intersection of the meridian and equator, the human face, a bird flying, a man swimming, a mast and yard, a plough, a *standard*, &c. &c. &c. See Lipsius de Cruce, i, i, c. 9.' (3) *Upon the translation of the Psalms by*



*Sir Philip Sydney*, &c., ll. 27-28: is there theological warrant for the belief that 'Angels learne by what the Church does here'? (4) *Hymne to God my God*, l. 9, 'That this is my South-west discoverie': has not Donne coined this phrase as a kind of antithesis to the famous 'North-west discovery', i.e. the attempt to discover a north-west passage to Cathay and the East Indies? 'Discovery' in this phrase had almost the sense of 'expedition'.

Three matters of exceptional interest and importance are discussed in Appendixes.

(1) 'Show me deare Christ, thy spouse'. Miss Gardner has convincingly demonstrated that in this sonnet Donne is not, as Gosse and Grierson and all later commentators have supposed, asking which is the true Church, but is lamenting, in general, the divisions among Christians, and, in particular, the recent humiliation of the Protestant Churches. She is the first to have perceived that the sonnet was occasioned by reflections on a particular event: that Donne is not here, as in his sermons, contrasting the 'painted Church' of Rome with the 'naked Church' of Geneva, but that, under the figure of the afflicted Zion of Lamentations, he is thinking of Protestants in general lamenting the disaster which had befallen their cause with the defeat of the Elector Palatine in the Battle of the White Mountain, near Prague, on 29 October 1620. The English felt so much at one with their Protestant brethren in the Empire that there was a widespread demand for war on their behalf: hence Donne saw only *one* figure lamenting and mourning 'in Germany and here'. This Appendix provides a superbly satisfying interpretation both of the sonnet and of Donne's theological position, a position which, as Miss Gardner, here and elsewhere, has so rightly insisted, was very similar to that of Hooker. No reader who has carefully considered her arguments will ever again be inclined to suggest that Donne was less than whole-hearted in his allegiance to the Church of England, or that he had any regretful hankering after the Church of Rome.

(2) In her Appendix on *Donne and Tilman: their Reluctance to take Orders* Miss Gardner remarks on the interesting fact that, in his reply to Tilman's poem (unfortunately not here reprinted), Donne makes no allusion whatever to those various accusations of personal unworthiness with which Tilman had defended his reluctance to take orders, and that his whole emphasis is upon 'Lay-scornings of the Ministry'. She very plausibly suggests that Donne is attributing to Tilman what had been the chief ground of his own reluctance, and declares that there is no reason to suppose that theological scruples had been the real cause of Donne's delay, or that he had been at heart unconvinced of the truth of the positions he had been helping Morton to defend. Neither would Donne have resented the implication that he finally took orders because it was the only course open to him: 'He believed that each man's life is "guided and governed" by God's "good providence", and that the motion of the spirit may come through the voices of superiors or friends, or through the circumstances of daily life, as much—and perhaps with less danger of mistake—as through the voice of the man's own heart. Donne is to be honoured because, having received his vocation thus indirectly, he tried to fulfil it worthily and set himself an exacting standard of duty.'

(3) In her commentary upon the 'Hymne to God my God, in my Sicknesse'

Miss Gardner has lightened many of the difficulties in that most difficult poem, and in the Appendix 'Paradise and Calvarie' she has very plausibly suggested that, when Donne says that Christ's cross and Adam's tree 'stood in one place', he means, not 'on the same spot', but in the same region, the same part of the world: in Palestine, that is to say, and in Mesopotamia. When, however, in Appendix E, she argues in favour of 1623 as the date of that poem, I do not find her equally convincing. Walton, in the 1640 edition of his *Life of Donne*, says that Donne wrote the poem on his death-bed, and adds, in the 1658 edition, that he wrote it on 'March 23. 1630' (O.S.), thus placing it eight days before Donne's death on 31 March 1631. On the other hand, Sir Julius Caesar, on the back of a sheet, preserved in one of his commonplace books, which contains this poem, has written: 'D. Dun Dene of Pauls | his verses in his greate | siknes | in Decemb. 1623' (misprinted on p. 132 of Miss Gardner's book as '1632'). Miss Gardner accepts Caesar's date, on the ground that, if Walton is right, it is very hard to explain Caesar's error. Why, she asks, if he did not receive the poem until after Donne's death in 1631, did he connect it with Donne's illness in 1623? And why, eight or more years after that illness, did he remember the year and approximately the right month? These arguments might well be unanswerable *if Walton had not given a precise date*; because he has done so, I, for my part, prefer to believe that either Caesar or the person who sent him the poem was confusing it with the 'Hymne to God the Father': they knew, somehow, that Donne had written a poem in his 'greate siknes' of 1623, and they assumed that this must be the one. For, while I find it just possible to suppose that Walton might have erroneously assumed the 'Hymne to God my God' to be a death-bed poem because it looked like one, I find it quite impossible to suppose that he deliberately fabricated (I might almost say, forged) a date in support of his conjecture. He was sometimes inaccurate and his chronology was sometimes vague, but he was at least honest. If, however, the evidence is really more evenly balanced than I suppose, ought not the fact that the 'Hymne' 'looks like a death-bed poem' to be allowed to tip the balance in Walton's favour—and in favour of those generations of readers who have been accustomed to regard this most personal and characteristic of all Donne's poems as his last survey and summary and farewell?

J. B. LEISHMAN

**Thomas Hobbes. A Bibliography.** By HUGH MACDONALD and MARY HARGREAVES. Pp. xviii + 84. London: The Bibliographical Society, 1952. No price given.

The ubiquitous Hobbes must be reckoned with by students of almost every aspect of seventeenth-century literature and thought. For too long we have had to be content with short-title catalogues of his writings provided by biographers and general historians, which give no indication of the many intricate problems raised by the early editions. In this elaborate bibliography Mr. Macdonald and Miss Hargreaves have performed a signal service to seventeenth-century studies.

They have set themselves the limited but heavy task of recording all editions of Hobbes's works published before 1725, and all collected editions up to and

since that date. They include 'all readily available translations up to 1700', but do not claim to have given a complete list. As in his bibliography of Dryden, Mr. Macdonald makes only incidental references to biographical and critical work on Hobbes. With a few exceptions, controversial writings directed against Hobbes are recorded only when they provoked him to a rejoinder. This necessary restriction must have been painful to Mr. Macdonald, who has elsewhere shown himself an erudite and delightfully apt commentator on peripheral literature of this kind. The omission is not, however, serious, since the more important of the innumerable 'answers' to Hobbes have been discussed in such specialized studies as Mr. John Bowle's recent *Hobbes and his Critics* and in general biographies.

The bibliography itself follows the orthodox pattern: for each item, a quasi-facsimile transcription of the title-page followed by a collation and a summary of contents, notes, and a register of copies. General notes on the history of the more important items, and on persons and other writings connected with them, are given before or after the bibliographical descriptions. The text is usefully supplemented by fourteen plates.

The authors have confined themselves to four main libraries—the Bodleian, the British Museum, Cambridge University Library, and Dr. Williams's Library; and when a book is not in all four of these, they record copies in other libraries within the Oxford-London-Cambridge area. This restriction has certain disadvantages: copies of some of the rarer items held in the Scottish libraries, France, and the United States are omitted. On the other hand, the register has the great virtue of being based on personal examination; and the Hobbes holdings in Oxford, London, and Cambridge are so large that the serious student must necessarily do most of his work there. For most purposes this bibliography will be an adequate and indispensable guide.

There are some minor untidinesses in the book. Biographical notes on Hobbes and the Devonshires are given in the preface and repeated, in a more elaborate form, on pp. 1-2. In the note on *Of Libertie and Necessitie* (no. 48) there is a reference forward to the edition of the book contained in *Hobb's Tripos* (no. 103); but the notes on *Humane Nature* (nos. 15, 16) carry no reference to the third edition in *Hobb's Tripos*. Hobbes's translator Sorbière is mentioned on pp. 13 and 17, but information on him is withheld until p. 20. On p. 18 there is a reference to Gassendi and Mersenne; a note on Gassendi follows immediately, but the main note on Mersenne is held over till pp. 23 and 24.

Considerable attention is rightly given to the early editions of *Leviathan*. Mr. Macdonald and Miss Hargreaves confirm the order of the three editions dated 1651 and distinguished by their title-page ornaments, as 'head', 'bear', and 'ornaments'. They give an excellent discussion of the genuineness of the imprints. The 'bear' imprint is certainly false, and it seems likely from the evidence which the authors have gathered and augmented that the book was printed in Holland, probably some time after 1651. There is some reasonable speculation on the history of the 'ornaments' edition, which must also be dated later than 1651 on the evidence of paper and type. Few of the notes have the quality of this one. Miss Hargreaves, who is said in the preface to have been largely responsible for the annotation, does not maintain the high standard set

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by Mr. Macdonald in his bibliography of Dryden. Some head-notes, for example those on the 'Answer' to *A Discourse upon Gondibert* (no. 38) and *Of Libertie and Necessitie* (no. 48), are exemplary; some are neat and entertaining excerpts from Aubrey and similar sources; but far too many are merely quotations from Robertson, Laird, and other critical biographers of Hobbes. It is natural that in describing such a wide variety of philosophical, mathematical, and scientific treatises the bibliographer should lean uneasily on the arm of the expert commentator; but an adequate account could have been given of, for example, *Rosetum Geometricum* (no. 72) or the lives of Hobbes (nos. 91-95) without direct recourse to the graceless and often muddled prose of Croom Robertson.

Such criticism does not affect the main virtues of the book. Mr. Macdonald and Miss Hargreaves have pioneered very difficult and sometimes dangerous territory with persistence and skill. They have supplied a badly needed piece of scholarly equipment, and deserve gratitude and commendation. It is to be hoped that they will have a chance of adding to their achievement in due course with a supplement or a revised edition.

JAMES KINSLEY

**John Milton's *An Apology Against a Pamphlet Call'd A Modest Confutation of the Animadversions upon the Remonstrant against Smectymnuus*.** Critical Edition by MILFORD C. JOCHUMS. Pp. xii+255. (Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, xxxv, 1, 2.) Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1950. \$5.00.

This handsome volume is the first critical edition of *An Apology*, indeed the first separate edition since its original publication. Dr. Jochums and the University of Illinois Press have spared nothing to make it the definitive edition, though one doubts whether the gain to scholarship is commensurate with the labour and cost. The volume contains an introduction explaining the circumstances and occasion of the tract, a facsimile text of the first edition with textual and typographical footnotes, and a commentary. In his Introduction and Commentary Dr. Jochums shows a wide knowledge of the Smectymnuan controversy, and his elucidations of Milton's references to Hall's writings are particularly helpful. He shows reason for thinking it was Bishop Hall's son Edward, not his eldest son Robert, who collaborated with him in *A Modest Confutation*. He also thinks that Milton's tract appeared in April or May 1642; but Milton's allusion to the 'miraculous and losselesse victories' in Ireland, which is the ground for Dr. Jochums's dating, is not incompatible with publication in March, the date conjectured by Masson. Naturally there was only one printing of the tract, but it was later reissued, probably in 1654, bound up with *The Reason of Church Government*; since the 1654 issue would be made up from sheets left over from the 1642 printing there are, as Dr. Jochums says, no significant textual changes. Dr. Jochums's facsimile text is composed from five copies of the 1642 edition at Illinois University; he also reproduces two states of four of the pages. The footnotes record the variants found not only in these five copies but also in one copy of the 1654 issue and in twelve photostats or films of the 1642 edition. It must be said that the

yield from this elaborate textual apparatus is meagre in the extreme. There are few textual variants, and most of the footnotes direct our attention to typographical irregularities of interest to no one but a student of seventeenth-century printing. Dr. Jochums is able to correct three verbal errors in the Columbia text, but two of them are peculiar to Columbia or at any rate do not appear in the Bohn edition. The one correction of the accepted text is *chafe* for *chase* (p. 9, l. 13), where Milton says of Hall, 'although I tell him keen truth, yet he may beare with me, since I am like to chafe him into some good knowledge'. One is glad of *chafe* as a sharper and a fitter word in the context than *chase*, but it is a small nut for so large a hammer. The commentary occupies the bulk of the volume, and Dr. Jochums understates his efforts when he tells us that 'Comment has been made upon every word, phrase, sentence, or idea which offered a hindrance to appreciation of the piece': the qualifying clause might have been omitted without serious exaggeration. Notes such as this are surely supererogatory: '*There be who*: There be [those] who.' Glosses are given on such words as *prosopopoeia*, which might have been left to the reader and his dictionary. *Sophisms* is supplied with the *O.E.D.* definition, and is immediately followed by a gloss on *sophister*. Many of these glosses miss the mark: 'in derision of' is explained as 'in contempt of'; while in the well-known satire on 'young Divines . . . scene so oft upon the Stage writhing and unboning their Clergie limnes', *unboning* is glossed: 'Taking the bones out: perhaps staggering.' If all such matter had been left out, together with much quotation from well-known critical sources in the style of a variorum edition, the volume would have been more useful, and maybe a little cheaper.

B. A. WRIGHT

**Swift's Satire on Learning in *A Tale of a Tub*.** By MIRIAM KOSH STARKMAN. Pp. xx+159. Princeton: University Press, 1950; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1951. \$3.00; 20s. net.

Though Swift was not greatly influenced by those changes in philosophic and scientific thought which distinguished the latter half of the seventeenth century, he was not without an understanding of their nature, nor was his patron Sir William Temple, who has too lightly been dismissed as the writer of graceful essays adorned with a pleasing style. Temple had lived through a period when cosmological knowledge had seen great advances. It was no longer possible to claim superiority for the thinkers of a time long past whose knowledge of the universe was not only limited but erroneous. Because in the field of literature Temple espoused the cause of the Ancients he has been classed with the obtuse and undiscerning. In actual fact his was a receptive, if not widely informed mind. In religion his orthodoxy was suspect at a time when doubts were better avoided. He was temperamentally tolerant, entertaining a distaste for harsh dogmatisms in religion, science, or the conduct of civil affairs. The members of the Royal Society, elated with an accession of knowledge past the dreams of an earlier generation, embraced unquestioningly the doctrine of human progress. This faith has had a long reign. The inevitability of progress is no longer easy to maintain. We are disillusioned and hope recedes. Temple, no optimist, rested his



faith on the institution of just law and order. This aim he regarded as the lesson chiefly to be drawn from classic history, art, and literature. Swift carried with him from Moor Park the same cool convictions. He was what today we should designate a traditionalist. It was from this stance that he directed the shafts of his satire against corruptions in religion and learning.

In 1704 an anonymous satirical work, oddly entitled *A Tale of a Tub*, shocked religious and startled literary circles. Denounced on the one hand as profane, on the other as scurrilous, the erudition of the unknown author was recognized, no less than his uncommon gifts as a wit, a stylist, and a master of irony. Scholars of repute and writers of standing to whom the authorship was attributed hastened to disavow the book in unmeasured language. From the first it was interpreted as an attack on accepted religious beliefs, a misreading fostered by an allegory more easily understood than the larger and more substantial content of the work. Swift himself, in the 'Apology' with which he introduced his fifth edition, effectively countered early misunderstandings. Nevertheless, the chief intent and structure of *A Tale* have been constant subjects of debate from his day to the present. It is a noteworthy tribute to Mrs. Starkman that, after all that has been written, we can say of her monograph that it is both a scholarly and a sensitively discerning commentary upon Swift's great work.

Even in our own day *A Tale of a Tub* has been interpreted as a religious allegory fenced about with confusing and irrelevant digressions. It is Mrs. Starkman's contention that, as her title indicates, Swift's satire is, in the main, directed against pedantry and false learning, that this is the substance of the book, that it is, in its major content, more than an incidental reflection of the Ancients and Moderns controversy, and in fact 'a self-consciously partisan document in that controversy'. Its close association with *The Battle of the Books* is self-evident, and no less evident its larger preoccupation with satire upon 'corruptions' in learning, enforced by attacks directed against Bentley and Wotton, as chief offenders.

Unless the object of an attack be clearly visualized satire will be ineffective. *A Tale of a Tub* has too frequently been conceived as a brilliant but shapeless work. It is Mrs. Starkman's purpose, demonstrating the objective of the satire, to reveal a unity of design in the book, inclusive of allegory and digressions. In her anxiety, however, to define the radius of Swift's satire she is led to impose some strain on her argument. The dangers of Puritanism, Catholicism, enthusiasm, as seen by Swift, are by Mrs. Starkman presented as, in his eyes, facets of modernity. That Swift's satire is continuous, or of one piece, can hardly be maintained; but she has succeeded, writing with clarity and directness, in showing that *A Tale of a Tub* has a formal, recognizable structure.

Mrs. Starkman has a well-balanced acquaintance with the seventeenth-century background to Swift's satire; she writes well, conducting the successive stages of her argument with an orderly directness. This is a clear-sighted and original book.

HAROLD WILLIAMS



**The Letters of Samuel Johnson. With Mrs. Thrale's Genuine Letters to Him.** Collected and edited by R. W. CHAPMAN. Vol. I, pp. xxxviii+452; Vol. II, pp. viii+531; Vol. III, pp. viii+477. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. 6 gns. net.

This is a work to be compared, for the triumphant use of experience in surmounting former difficulties, with nothing less than the Skerryvore lighthouse. It has gone up stone by stone: merely to enumerate the articles in which Dr. Chapman has from time to time reported progress—scrutinized sources of information, established credentials of witnesses, and so on—would take too long. Moreover, it has been, and continues to be, in some degree, a work of collaboration, offering itself for comparison with eighteenth-century Shakespearian studies at their happiest, as to community of intellectual goods. The acknowledgements of willing and serviceable aid—of the courtesy and insight of American owners of manuscripts, of the labours of fellow scholars, especially other editors of Johnson and Boswell—these also are too numerous for mention; it must be enough to say that lovers of Johnson in Oxford, in notable American universities and libraries, and in his native place, are nobly represented in this edition; and it is pleasant to think that A. L. Reade lived to see it appear. Experts in many fields have contributed various information; the editor might well have taken for his motto Johnson's words to Thomas Warton: 'A commentary must arise from the fortuitous discoveries of many men, in devious walks of literature' (letter 114).

In measuring the scope of this undertaking, comparison with G. B. Hill's edition of the *Letters* must be the first instrument. His numeration is preserved (as his pagination was in Dr. L. F. Powell's revised edition of the *Life*)—even, occasionally, at some cost. The scale is much enlarged. Apart from the inclusion of the Thrale letters, there is the very considerable number of Johnson's own letters recovered since Hill published his two volumes in 1892—including some he was able to include in his subsequent *Johnsonian Miscellanies*; and the plan of his edition had been selective: it excluded those letters which he had already edited in the *Life*. Moreover, a great deal of illustrative material, having been gathered since his day, awaited organization. And to all this Dr. Chapman is able to add unpublished letters and fresh information: his total of letters is nearly a third as much again as that of Hill's *Life* and *Letters* together; his commentary is at once fuller and more elaborate, thus carrying exploration a day's march beyond even the Hill-Powell *Life* and *Tour*. Expansion to three volumes is easily accounted for; the marvel is that these three are made to hold so much. The establishment of the text likewise has advanced beyond calculation: it represents a lifetime of Johnsonian scholarship, of *literature*, in Johnson's own large sense of the word, of lying in ambush for the reluctant witness and pursuing every piece of evidence to its last retreat.

The serious reader, intent on availing himself of the full resources of this edition, must address himself to it sturdily. He must familiarize himself with the system of numeration: thus, if several letters have come to light since Hill's count, one may be, e.g. 264. 3, and, if more than one of the Thrales reply, the figures may reach 264. 3*b*. Then, where Hill's dating was at fault, he will see, for example, instead of the letter formerly placed 29th, a reference carrying him to the

interstice between 36 and 37. In a very few instances, he must reckon with the emergence of a letter at a late stage in the preparation of this edition: thus, 229. 2 appears in the Addenda but has not been recorded in the text. Moreover, having so much fresh and important material, Dr. Chapman must sometimes refer the reader to a note in Hill's *Letters* or the Hill-Powell *Life*, for an illustration he has not chosen to use himself. (Computation, not supported by common sense, suggests that the careful reader might find himself pursuing cross-references with eleven volumes propped open at once.) And, where the matter is so rich and intricate, there must be a system of abbreviations and distinctive variations of type. (In this, as in other respects, the editor is of course well served by that press which has been responsible for so many Johnsonian undertakings.) All these devices, like a long list of *dramatis personae*, must be memorized at the outset.

Once the plan is mastered, however, the reader will find himself sustained and even exhilarated by its consistency. The cross-referencing will mean much more than a mode of finding his way about; it enables him to form candid judgements, with all available evidence in view. Thus, Mrs. Thrale's treatment of Boswell is seen to be petulant not deliberately malicious: she printed Johnson's praise of him in 337, but suppressed that in 408; and Johnson's brief notes to Nichols are shown to form a pattern illustrating his progress in the work we know as the *Lives of the Poets*. The map of many transactions is fairly spread before our eyes.

It will, of course, be in everyone's mind that a principal reason for the complex plan of this edition is the chance that brought the Malahide and Fettercairn deposits to light within recent years and governed their gradual publication. These events—hardly less disturbing than earthquakes—have given rise to Addenda, Postscripts and Further Addenda; most numerous, naturally, in Volume I. The editor explains his method of dealing with such exigencies: 'I should perhaps apologize for having intercalated notes on the latest Malahide finds by way of postscripts. My excuse is that this form of statement exhibits the process of trial and (sometimes) error, which does not lack edification' (iii. 309). These circumstances, however, are also to be thought of as forcing upon our notice something latent in the very nature of the undertaking. When a man inspires such intensity of editorial and biographical devotion as Johnson (and when, unlike Shakespeare, he leaves us substantial means for the satisfaction of our curiosity), finality is not to be looked for. The greatest edition, whether of *Life* or *Letters*, must still be growing: as Dr. Chapman and Dr. Powell receive and give mutual help—as one carries a step further his elucidation of the famous *impransus* letter (10), or the other supplies fresh clues to problems posed by Boswell's narrative—so lesser men will still be finding or surmising answers to questions raised by these two, at least so long as the issue of Boswellian papers continues.

What is achieved by *this* edition may best be considered under the heads of comprehensiveness, correctness of text and fullness of illustrative commentary—even though these cannot always be kept apart.

The most immediate and solid satisfaction, for its possessor, consists in having all the hitherto known letters together. The scope of its plan is indeed so wide that room is found for some letters which Johnson wrote, and some which he is

reputed to have written, on others' behalf: not merely for that by which Frances Reynolds hoped to reconcile herself to her brother (1149), but also formal pieces differing not much from the dedications he wrote on behalf of needy authors. The question must arise, whether it was prudent to swell so considerable a bulk by including letters from the Thrale household—all but a very few, of course, being Mrs. Thrale's. That, if any of Johnson's correspondents were to be chosen for this perilous honour, she had first claim, we must agree. Against the decision to include them it might still be urged that they are significantly incomplete. From the evidence, Dr. Chapman infers that, in the first grief and anger of estrangement, Johnson may have destroyed those that he could lay hands on—the most recent; while it was tenderness that led him to do away with her eldest daughter's letters written at the time of the quarrel and probably bearing on its cause. Thus, the argument for inclusion—that the two sides of a correspondence with a family so important in Johnson's life completes the story of that life—is qualified by the consideration that the other side fails at the crisis of this very story. Yet Mrs. Thrale by her manipulation of her own letters had posed a textual problem: Hill's distrust of her as a witness had to be reconsidered. The labours of Professor Clifford and Miss Balderston had shown that she deserved a hearing; and, unless a separate volume were to be devoted to those of her letters judged genuine, they must be intercalated here.

The Thrale letters apart, we have here, in addition to what Hill knew, not only those little windfalls which may usually be gathered even after the appearance of an edition supposed complete, but also more than one substantial series (to 'Queeny' Thrale, to Robert Chambers); and, amongst single acquisitions, many of importance. Following Hill's plan, Dr. Chapman gives a scrupulous record of letters reported but not extant, or not obtainable, 304. 2 being perhaps an extreme instance of this scrupulosity. His own happy find of 42. 1 suggests that a few unrecorded letters may still await discovery. To conclude, of the 472 items by which Dr. Chapman's total exceeds Hill's, many are valuable in themselves, many help to set others in perspective, and not a few are new.

The text has been established by various means: wherever the original of a letter already printed is extant, by collation. Sometimes Hill had to rely on a transcript, and even a careful and skilful scribe might fall into one of the snares set by Johnson's handwriting—e.g. yet/got. Dr. Chapman has shown that an editor of Johnson's own day did not reckon it his business to correct printed copy in this way, even when he had the means, but merely to scan it with an eye to the sense and general probability. (It was, however, a common practice to send the originals to the printing-house, and the standard of fidelity there was high.) Where there is no manuscript, he brings to bear on the printed text his experience in textual criticism and his knowledge of what Johnson is likely to have written: of his idiom and that of his age, together with its social usage; and can say, from familiarity with his handwriting, how a corruption may be inferred. (The present reviewer tentatively hazards the suggestion—if Johnson's hand allows it—that, when he playfully remonstrates with Edmund Hector for his love of giving, he must surely have continued, or intended to continue: 'Your friends [not 'your minds'] ought to learn how to refuse.' 376. 1.) Moreover, he can discount

apparent irregularities, knowing that Johnson was sometimes careless as to small words, or the punctuation of a passage whose close coincided with a visual pause: the end of line or page. Such an intricate system of detection calls for help from persons so various as dignitaries of the Church and the Edinburgh police (this would surely have pleased Boswell).

Another sort of correction—that of the dating of these letters—has brought into play the editor's familiarity with eighteenth-century life and with material objects surviving from that age—the postal system, for example, and the varying aspects of letters transmitted by various means. 'I do not apologize', he observes, 'for my insistence on these postal minutiae: a neglected part of epistolary editing, and one that is sometimes not unimportant' (i. 378). He is often able to cite evidence not recognized by Hill—though it may not prove conclusive, and can be extremely minute. Johnson, who was insistent with Mrs. Thrale on the value of exact dating, deserves this care, though he seems to have been capable of occasional odd blunders.

To the *illustration* of these letters, the editor comes furnished with experience that Johnson himself would have relished—of the whole process of putting works of literature through the press. By this means, and in collaboration with Professor Nichol Smith, such allusions to contemporary publications as those in 15 and 64 are elucidated; and, by the light of ancient and modern studies, many of Hill's instances are considered in a wider context. (Where ancient authors are concerned, as in the tags with which Johnson teased and flattered Mrs. Thrale, Dr. Chapman prefers to offer the modern reader those translations which Johnson himself would have approved.) Besides the recognizable, if not always identifiable, quotations, there are many passages that ring allusively. A list of unsolved problems therefore remains, to challenge diligence and ingenuity. For all this width of illustration, however, there is no dispersion. From the anecdotal discursiveness of Hill's notes, we are brought steadily back to the main theme, sometimes with a hint that Hill on Johnson's Oxford, or Johnson's London, makes good reading; more often, the substance of his account is given in smaller compass. Very rarely, a topic which might have invited attention is curtly dismissed: it is surely the *mixture* of sense and nonsense in Charlotte Lennox's *Shakespeare Illustrated*, and in Johnson's dealings with her and her books, that pricks curiosity. But this edition is (like Johnson's *Dictionary* itself), as to all debatable decisions, one man's work; and who—given the chance of such an editor—would have preferred a Committee and a Variorum? It is time to leave particular instances and turn to remark that insight into Johnson's mind and heart which subtly pervades these illustrative notes, finding explicit utterance only here and there, as in the pungent retort to idle talk of hypochondria in a comment on 309, or this on a quotation from the Psalms in 465: 'J. read the Bible in many tongues, and quotes or translates indifferently.' (Surely, of deliberate and positive Anglicans, Johnson was the least typical.)

The subdivision of the Index may perhaps be thought too curious. Persons and Authors, for example, occupy separate categories; and, while careful cross-reference saves the reader from error, he may sometimes wish that, of the two distinct classes of authors, the Ancients had been left standing alone, and the

Moderns allowed to mingle with Persons. Index VII, 'Johnson's English', seems to hint at a compromise between a glossary of contemporary usage and an analysis of Johnsonian idiom. If knowledge of eighteenth-century English had been taken for granted, there would have been room to consider (for example) the extension of meaning which pleasantries and intimacy allow to such words as *genius* and *image*, in the letters as contrasted with the published writings. But perhaps it may already be too late to count on such knowledge even among those likely to use this edition, and the time be not far distant when the Clarendon Press must appoint fit persons to compile an eighth index, of Dr. Chapman's English, for a barbarous generation.

In so big and intricate a work, some small errors must necessarily elude vigilance;<sup>1</sup> besides those mentioned in the Errata list, a few are acknowledged where they occur. So far as the present reviewer can tell, one alone for which any importance could be claimed has escaped both meshes: for 890. 3 we are referred to the Addenda, from which this letter seems to have slipped.

It remains to be asked, what is the gain to our knowledge of Johnson from having thus gathered and set out all of his letters known to survive. To one reader at least, steady progress through the collection has made it even more evident than before why Johnson was so much loved. Few men can have stood to lose less by total exposure. As the curiosity of survivors had demanded a version of the 'rough' letter in which Johnson answered Mrs. Thrale's announcement of her second marriage (970), so the rigours of modern scholarship have exacted the publication and analysis of the enigmatic letter (in French, but not singular in this respect) in which he confessed to her his fears of insanity (307. 1). Both she had rightly withheld but pardonably preserved. Boswell likewise suppressed some part of the letters in which Johnson reported his case to his physicians; but anything from his hand in these latter years was too precious to be destroyed. Any collection of Johnson's letters we are ever likely to possess must prompt the wish that more had been preserved from his youth and middle age: one only survives in which he uses 'thee' and 'thou' (12, to his wife)—a usage he seems to have kept, in talk, for particular friends and occasions. This is the category least likely to increase, but even the few early letters that we have help to redress the balance of the *Life*. The brief notes which show him dealing with a business in straits serve to correct Boswell's picture of the philosopher making himself ridiculous in the part of Thrale's executor. 'I was bred a Bookseller' (609). One trade at least was no mystery to him.

To the mingled influences of pride, self-interest and affection which safeguarded the letters of Johnson's later years we owe the evidence of his wise and

<sup>1</sup> The following few and unimportant corrections are offered as the reviewer's contribution to subsequent editions:

47, n., 'the' Barbados wrongly suggests a group of islands.

154, n. 2, for Index III read V.

196, n. 1, for H.L.D. read H.L.P.

574. 1. reference to Addenda: for p. 530 read p. 529.

610. 1. " " " " for p. 529 read p. 530, and, in this passage of Addenda, for I. 442 read I. 432.

In Appendix E. II, § 5. d, the reference to Porter should read § 2.



tender counsels (as in 338); of his insight and sympathy (as in 306); his delicacy in acknowledgements of kindness and in the conduct of his 'vicarious charities'; the ceremonious politeness of which he was justly proud, and the powerful mind that, even when his horizon was narrowed by sickness and confinement, could still order his ideas. Judged by the standards of their age, these are not letters of art. When Johnson rises to an epistolary setpiece we may suspect irony—and, sure enough, the rocket presently explodes and comes down in a shower of sparks: 'Now you think yourself the first Writer in the world for a letter about nothing. Can you write such a letter as this? So miscellaneous, with such noble disdain of regularity, like Shakespeare's works, such graceful negligence of transition like the ancient enthusiasts' (657). The most entertaining, written to Mrs. Thrale from the Hebrides, and pointed by a sense of place and time in which the rest are wanting, register the exceptional stimulus of that propitious journey, and of his best correspondent; for such she seems to have been in the years when he could refer to her house as 'home' (206); on Tuesday speak of his 'love and reverence' for her and on Wednesday call her 'a goose' (401 and 403). He wished her to preserve these letters; not (I surmise) merely as memoranda for his book.

Although Johnson would certainly not have acquiesced in this project—the publication of all his surviving letters—he would surely have been pleased with the way in which it has been carried out. 'I like that *muddling* work', he is reported to have said of his own Dictionary, and here also Dr. Chapman is in sympathy with him: unperturbed, in this labour of love, by detail as by magnitude. He could not but value a memorial strong in that very union of qualities for which the great lighthouse itself is celebrated: mass and elegance.

MARY LASCELLES

**The Wake of the Bounty.** By C. S. WILKINSON. Pp. xiv+200. London: Cassell, 1953. 18s. net.

This is a book containing some new and interesting information about Fletcher Christian, the organizer and leader of the famous mutiny on the *Bounty*, but its main thesis is unfortunately based on evidence which Mr. Wilkinson has either completely misunderstood, or which does not exist at all. Briefly, Mr. Wilkinson wants to prove that Fletcher Christian, having escaped from Pitcairn Island, was in England in 1795, that Wordsworth met him in the West Country somewhere about that date, and that Wordsworth passed on his story to Coleridge who thereupon made Christian his 'model' for the 'Ancient Mariner'. Mr. Wilkinson has a genuine enthusiasm for his subject, but he is insufficiently familiar with the Wordsworth literature, especially with what has been published of recent years, and his book is thus full of inaccuracies.

The facts behind Mr. Wilkinson's theory are as follows. Coleridge, in a list in one of his notebooks of twenty-eight projected 'works', entered as No. 22, 'Adventures of *Christian* the Mutineer'. Christian and Wordsworth were both Cumbrians, and both attended Cockermouth Grammar School, though as Wordsworth went there for only six months at the age of six, and as Christian was six years his senior, it is an exaggeration to call them 'school-mates'. Wordsworth, while at St. John's College, Cambridge, knew Fletcher Christian's brother,



Edward Christian, who was Professor of Law and represented the Wordsworth family in their lawsuit with Lord Lonsdale. Two members of Wordsworth's family, his uncle Canon Cookson and his cousin Captain John Wordsworth, and several other Cumbrians and Johnians, joined actively in Edward Christian's defence of his brother against Captain Bligh's account of the mutiny given at the court martial of the captured mutineers in 1792. The discovery of the rare pamphlet, published in 1794, in which Edward Christian marshalled his accusations against Bligh, and which was signed by these very respectable people, is Mr. Wilkinson's most interesting achievement. Unfortunately he does not tell us where it may be consulted.

Mr. Wilkinson produces no evidence whatever that Christian was in England in 1795, and this fundamental weakness really invalidates his case from the start. On the subject of Wordsworth's supposed dealings with Christian in that year he makes a major blunder from which most of his other mistakes about Wordsworth follow. He repeats a statement, first made many years ago by Harper, that from January to September 1795 'Wordsworth disappeared from the knowledge of posterity' (p. 156 and elsewhere). Into these mysterious nine months Mr. Wilkinson tries to fit a clandestine visit to Nether Stowey, apparently to meet Coleridge on secret business connected with Christian, and a visit to Dumfriesshire, one of the supposed hiding-places of the supposedly returned mutineer. Now it is, of course, quite untrue that Wordsworth's movements before September 1795 are unaccounted for. He went in February from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to London, where he lived mainly with Basil Montagu in chambers in Lincoln's Inn.<sup>1</sup> In the middle of August he went to Bristol, where he stayed for 'at least five weeks'<sup>2</sup> in the house of Mr. John Pinney, the well-known West India merchant, whose sons were friends and pupils of Montagu. From there he went to Racedown on 26 September.

Mr. Wilkinson thinks it strange 'that there is no record of the first meeting of Coleridge and Wordsworth', and therefore suggests a 'surreptitious' visit to Stowey for that purpose while he was at Bristol. But Wordsworth did mention in the letter already quoted that he had met Coleridge in Bristol, though he had 'seen but little of him', and long afterwards he recalled that he had first met him 'in lodgings in Bristol about the year 1795'. Coleridge was on a visit to Stowey during part of this time but there is no reason to suppose that Wordsworth also went there.

We all know that Wordsworth's memory for dates in later years was inaccurate; he often, for instance, misdates the composition of his own poems. It is perfectly true that the passage quoted by Mr. Wilkinson from the 'Autobiographical Memoir', about his sojourn in the West, contains inaccurate statements. But to suggest that Wordsworth, fifty years afterwards, deliberately falsified the date of his arrival at Racedown because he wished to conceal his presence in the West in 1795 is quite fantastic. His movements at the time were well known to all his

<sup>1</sup> *Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. E. de Selincourt (Oxford, 1935), p. 138, note, quoting Montagu's autobiographical MS.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters, etc.: Later Years*, ed. de Selincourt, vol. iii, Appendix, p. 1333. W. W. to W. Mathews, 24 Oct. 1795.

relations and friends. Mr. Wilkinson even sees a mystery in the move from Racedown to Alfoxden in 1797. Yet the letters of Dorothy and Coleridge at the time make the whole thing perfectly simple.

*The Wake of the Bounty* is described as 'a piece of literary detection'. But Mr. Wilkinson's detective methods are very imperfect. He is, for instance, anxious to prove that Wordsworth visited the Isle of Man in early life (p. 144), the Isle being apparently the residence of Christian's mother. He therefore tells us that the *Elegiac Stanzas on Peele Castle in a Storm*, written in 1805 and inspired by a picture by Sir George Beaumont, refer not to 'Piel' off the coast of Furness, but to 'Peele' in the Isle of Man. But what are the facts? First, it is known that Wordsworth spent the month of August 1794 at Rampside, exactly opposite Piel in Furness. Secondly, when he did visit the Isle of Man in 1833 he wrote to Dorothy, who had previously been there, 'I liked your Isle of Man better than I expected', showing that this must have been his first visit. The spelling of 'Piel' is very various,<sup>1</sup> and the painting had no pretensions to topographical exactitude.

There are many other inaccuracies, too numerous to mention. The question remains: had Wordsworth or Coleridge any special interest in or knowledge of Fletcher Christian, beyond that of the general public? There is no evidence whatever that they had. That Coleridge felt the romance of his unknown adventures is clear from his entry in the notebook. But the story of the *Bounty* was fresh in men's minds, and the voyage of the Ancient Mariner is no more like that of the *Bounty* than it is like that of many another voyager in the South Seas. As Lowes says,<sup>2</sup> Coleridge's ship 'might have been a ship of Drake, or Le Maire, or Roggeveen, or Cook, or Bligh'. As for Wordsworth, he had followed with interest Edward Christian's defence of his brother, and felt sufficiently strongly about it to address a letter to a West Country magazine while he was at Racedown. Dr. MacGillivray, who discovered this letter, comments upon it in this journal (pp. 62-66). If Wordsworth had had secret dealings with Christian he would scarcely have written to the press. Mr. Wilkinson's Wordsworth belongs indeed to the world of fiction, not of fact.

MARY MOORMAN

**Wordsworth.** Centenary Studies presented at Cornell and Princeton Universities by DOUGLAS BUSH, FREDERICK A. POTTLE, EARL LESLIE GRIGGS, JOHN CROWE RANSOM, B. IFOR EVANS, LIONEL TRILLING, WILLARD L. SPERRY. Edited by GILBERT T. DUNKLIN. Pp. xvi+169. Princeton: University Press; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1951. \$3.00; 20s. net.

Mr. Gilbert Dunklin's introduction to this centenary volume suggests more of a common outlook than its contents actually present. The first paper, Professor Douglas Bush's 'Wordsworth: A Minority Report', in spite of occasional felicitous sentences and flashes of individual insight, is hardly to be distinguished from any conventional assessment of the last 150 years, with its insistence on the poetry of 'the Wordsworth of the great decade, who has always been *the* Wordsworth'—as incomplete a foundation for the study of Wordsworth as the great

<sup>1</sup> In a map of 1667 it is spelt 'Peele' as Wordsworth spelt it.

<sup>2</sup> J. L. Lowes, *The Road to Xanadu* (London, 1927), p. 124.

tragedies are for the study of Shakespeare. Professor Earl Leslie Griggs's 'Wordsworth through Coleridge's Eyes' does not help us to any considerable extent to understand Wordsworth better a hundred years after his death, and, in spite of a few warning phrases, leaves the reader with the impression that Coleridge's view of Wordsworth and account of their relations are to be accepted without serious question. Compassion for Coleridge's real sufferings ought not to lead us to ignore what should be the obvious fact that he, like every man in his condition, was not an altogether trustworthy witness either to what happened or to its interpretation. It certainly ought not to lead to an accusation of cruelty and lack of sympathy against Dorothy Wordsworth when she cried out in generous indignation against Coleridge's inconsiderate, or worse, treatment of her friend Sara Hutchinson. Nor ought the very disturbing evidence of Crabb Robinson in his diary record of the negotiations of 1812 to be ignored and glossed over by a vague reference to 'the mediation of mutual friends'.

The remaining papers are more definitely related to the professed object of the volume. Dr. Ifor Evans sticks most closely to his text in 'Wordsworth and the European Problem of the Twentieth Century', but in fact he goes outside the limits of our own time and, like Professor Pottle in 'The Eye and the Object in the Poetry of Wordsworth', Professor Ransom in his 'Notes toward an Understanding of Poetry' and Professor Lionel Trilling on 'Wordsworth and the Iron Time', writes criticism which is relevant to more than contemporary evaluations. It may be asked indeed about this as about other centenary volumes whether it may not be of even greater interest to readers of a hundred years hence than to those of today. Is it of more than historical interest that this or that element in a poet's work, or the whole of his work, should appeal to one age more than to another? Is the value of the poetry itself affected by what we think or say of it, or are not we rather judging ourselves and unconsciously revealing the presuppositions of our own age? Of these four writers at least it may be said that they are aware of the dangers which beset them, and that they show the virtues of critical minds dealing with matters of permanent and not merely temporary validity. Wordsworth himself would have approved of their work because they consider the whole body of his work, by inference if not by direct reference, and attempt to reach through it to the first principles which were his main concern.

EDITH C. BATHO

**Lord Byron. Christian Virtues.** By G. WILSON KNIGHT. Pp. xvi+304. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952. 30s. net.

ONE of the oddest things about Byron is that the memory of his personal charm, so well attested by innumerable contemporaries, did not much outlast his death. The only hero-worshipping biographies are those by his intimates Moore, Teresa Guiccioli, and Pietro Gamba. There is nothing by a later biographer corresponding to Dowden's sentimental *Life of Shelley*; and, especially since Lord Lovelace's *Astaire* (1905), biographers like Sir Harold Nicolson, Mr. Peter Quennell, and the Marchesa Origo have admired both his poetry and his personality well this side of idolatry. Has the time come for giving the

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pendulum a good push in the other direction? Mr. Wilson Knight certainly thinks it has; but we may well doubt whether he has not pushed a bit too hard. Among the many rather surprising claims for Byron made here are that he was 'the supreme genius of our era' (p. 33), 'our greatest poet in the widest sense of the term since Shakespeare' (p. 3), instinctively an educator (p. 245) and a saviour (p. 85), and finally, as both 'poet-philosopher' and 'poet-pacifist' (p. 184), worthy to be likened to Socrates and Jesus Christ (pp. 31, 216, 256). We are even (pp. 98-99) asked to believe Teresa (writing more than forty years after his death, and in a passage of significant and characteristic vagueness) when she declares that he often 'succoured and restored to the right path' young girls, sending them home 'rescued and enlightened by the counsels of wisdom'.

Mr. Knight sets out to give 'less the story of a life than a mosaic of evidence regarding *qualities*'. He is scornful of 'biographical skill of the conventional kind', by which he seems to mean scrupulous attention to the time-sequence of events, and prefers what he calls 'the spatial approach'—briefly, the grouping of actions and incidents round chosen centres of interest without special reference to the order in which they occurred. There is nothing very new in this method, and in fact some respect for despised Father Time seems to be shown by the placing of the longest chapter, 'Poetic Action', concerned almost entirely with the years 1820 to 1824, late in the book.

The real novelty consists in the claim put forward that here for the first time the evidence is allowed 'to speak, as far as possible, for itself'. It is true that remarkable industry has gone to the collection of these hundreds (thousands, perhaps) of references, almost every statement being buttressed by authority of some kind. Mr. Knight's book, moreover, is superior to every other Byron book I know in one respect at least—the convenience of his method of noting references. Everything is put in the text; and why not? As he justly remarks, we soon get used to the brackets, and are saved the infuriating labour of continually turning to the end of the book. But alas, documentation is not enough. Collection, even on this scale, involves selection, and the *principle* of selection is what really matters; so after all it is an illusion to suppose that the evidence can ever be left to speak for itself. When, as so often in Byron's case, the authorities conflict, one has to be weighed against another, and this means considering carefully the general impression of reliability or otherwise made by each. But instead of this, the sort of thing Mr. Knight does is to accept the common verdict that Hunt and Trelawny were biased against Byron, but reject the not less sound reasons for regarding with equal suspicion Teresa Guiccioli's comical-pathetic self-prostration. The eulogy of her book (pp. 40-47) is a monument of special pleading; not once is the Marchesa Origo's brilliant and devastating, though affectionate, account of Teresa's later life (*The Last Attachment*, ch. x, 'Living After') even referred to, though it may be said to have settled her status as an 'authority' once and for all.

Another curious aspect of the book also deserves notice. Mr. Knight promises a second volume which is to deal with the poet's vices; meanwhile, he argues, 'the recognition of virtues should surely take precedence over any enquiry into our subject's vices. The negative must . . . be studied in terms of the positive'.

We may well accept the principle without accepting its practical consequence here—the attempt to enumerate virtues in complete isolation from vices. The ‘innocent’ reader (if there be such among readers of books on Byron) would scarcely guess from this volume that he had any vices at all; in fact Teresa says roundly, remaining unreprieved by Mr. Knight, that he hadn’t any (p. 41 and note). On the next page we are told that Byron’s claim that he ‘never seduced any woman’, recorded by Medwin, is accepted by M. André Maurois, but not that the volume of letters from thirteen women *To Lord Byron* (1939, ed. Paston and Quennell) throws some doubt on even this technical claim to a somewhat qualified virtue. The only substantial passage concerning Byron’s separation from his wife is simply a reprint of several pages from the well-known but to uninformed readers extremely misleading defence written in reply to the attack in *Blackwood’s Magazine*. The same one-sidedness vitiates the treatment of even comparatively trivial matters, such as the poet’s dislike of field sports, which is set down solely to his love of animals, without allusion to the possibility that (as with dancing) Byron’s lameness may also have had something to do with it. As a rejoinder to Mr. Quennell, who questioned Byron’s historical knowledge, we are given *in extenso* (from Moore’s *Life*) a list of alleged early reading the comical extravagance of which almost wholly defeats Mr. Knight’s laudable enough intention in quoting it. A far more persuasive if less ‘super-human’ account might have been based on the three chapters in Miss E. F. Boyd’s critical study, *Byron’s Don Juan* (1945), dealing in a soberly factual way with his library and his reading.

It is needless, though it would be only too easy, to add further examples. Whenever Mr. Knight is right—as, on the whole, in the matter of Byron’s wide reading, or his generosity to Moore and Coleridge—he spoils his case by overstating it. The result is that when, in the last two chapters, we come upon the full development of this ‘Nietzschean’ view of Byron as ‘a new blending of the Christian and the pagan in both psychology and politics’, and as ‘demonstrating in his own life the nature of true leadership and good government’ (pp. 262–3), we are less, not more, prepared to give it serious consideration than when we started, and feel only that a just view of the poet’s complex and puzzling character, and of the significance of his work for the world of the twentieth century, is not at all likely to be arrived at through such a queer combination of industrious minuteness and fanatical hero-worship.

R. W. KING

**The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry. Sources of the Poetic Imagination in Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold.** By E. D. H. JOHNSON. Pp. xvi + 224. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1953. \$4.00; 25s. net.

The alien vision is the artist’s vision. The busy and practically minded contemporaries of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold had little time for it, fearing, with some justification, that its tendency could only be to dissolve the clear-cut assumptions upon which their purposive activity was based. But the artists still believed, like the great Romantics before them, that they had a responsibility



towards society. So they tried to speak home to their fellow men in terms which would not be considered subversive.

It has sometimes been held that in making this attempt they forgot the talents entrusted to them. Professor Johnson disagrees. He admits that Tennyson and Browning did, after their early rebuffs, give their age what it demanded and that Arnold did devote the later years of his poetic career very largely to supplying the great or excellent actions, plainly rendered, which he thought men needed; but he insists that each of them, while fulfilling his social function as he conceived it, arrived at ways of recording at the same time his own private insights. Indeed, his title might equally well be 'Double Awareness in Victorian Poetry'.

There is no startling novelty about this thesis. What is distinctive in Professor Johnson's statement of it is his alert and scrupulous analysis of the means by which each of the chosen poets succeeded in expressing his alien vision in the popular works of his maturity. The study of Tennyson is the most challenging of the three. Tennyson was tormented throughout his life by the problem of appearance and reality; and Professor Johnson shows how he contrived, above all in the *Idylls of the King*, both to present appearances which would gratify his Victorian public and to suggest, by the thematic use of dream, madness, vision, and the quest, his profound sense of their hollowness and of the mysterious spiritual reality which underlay them. In a similar fashion, Browning is seen to have discovered in the dramatic monologue a means of expressing a subversive criticism of civilized life in terms which would not affront his readers. On the surface, these poems are lively portraits of familiar types; but Professor Johnson is able to demonstrate that at a deeper level they imply Browning's unqualified individualistic belief in the intuitive wisdom of the heart as against the rational wisdom of the world. Again and again in them, life demands of a religious or political man that he resist some prepotent institution, of a lover that he defy conventional morality, of an artist that he assert himself against tradition. Above all in *The Ring and the Book* itself does Browning succeed in his double task. Arnold, too, had his disquieting perceptions. His awareness of the growing estrangement of the artist from society resulted in his dwelling sadly, even in the poems which he intended to be most classical and most animating, upon the isolation of the exceptional person. Nor were these three poets alone in exhibiting in their work the conflict between the public conscience of the man of letters and the private conscience of the artist; Professor Johnson, finding it also in that of Dickens and Thackeray, can tentatively ascribe to it the characteristic quality of our earlier Victorian literature. At all events, a very different quality characterizes the output of those later Victorian aesthetes who ended the contradiction by denying their social responsibilities.

Professor Johnson's work is primarily interpretative. He voices the hope that his elucidations may provide a secure basis for reassessing the total achievement of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold; and he evidently believes that this reassessment would be distinctly favourable to all three of them. Perhaps it would. But it is proper to insist in the meantime that a demonstration of, for example, the interesting complexity of Tennyson's intention in the *Idylls of the King* is not itself a proof of the rich significance of his actual performance. When, however,



the achievement of the earlier Victorian poets is next revalued, it may well be found that Professor Johnson has, in this scholarly and well-written study, consolidated some of the main positions from which criticism will advance.

J. D. JUMP

**The English Utopia.** By A. L. MORTON. Pp. 230. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1952. 18s. net.

Mr. Morton's book is a frankly Marxist interpretation of 'the development of the conception of historical materialism' (whatever that may mean) in English Utopian writing (p. 75). The ultimate appeal is to the oracles of Marx, Lenin, or Stalin, and what does not contribute to the 'dialectics of the development of the working classes' is irrelevant to this history. There could be little or nothing of scholarly or literary interest in such a book if Mr. Morton were not a broad-minded Socialist who has faith in humanity and belief in the possibilities of the growth and development of the individual. To him 'a socialist society is a form of movement in which each individual is able to reach his highest potentialities in his relation to other individuals' (p. 200). The Utopian theme is thus congenial to Mr. Morton, and his belief in the individual makes him write well and with sympathy about the great Utopian writers like More, Swift, and William Morris.

It is one of the merits of Mr. Morton's book that he pursues Utopia not only in political treatises but also in those fantasies of space and time where the Utopian ideal enters. When values are assessed, however, they are made to conform to the measure of class which thwarts the bourgeois writer and elates the Socialist. Hence the good impression created by some of Mr. Morton's best observations is often destroyed almost immediately. We are grateful to learn that 'the element of fantasy is in Swift, and in many though not all of his predecessors, further evidence of a profound sense of social defeat and of a retreat from the reality of the world in which that defeat had been suffered' (p. 97). But is it really necessary to believe that the same element in Rabelais and Cyrano de Bergerac 'is that of a rising class, exuberant and conscious of its increasing power and using this weapon to ridicule the shams and absurdities of a decaying society' (ibid.)? When told that this class was the 'humanists' the reader's confidence is severely shaken. Humanism was in its beginnings a princely undertaking until it gradually became the property of individuals of all classes.

Mr. Morton is at his happiest when at rare moments he can get away from class and speak about individuals. He writes admirably about Cervantes, and the reader cannot help feeling thankful that in Spain 'the bourgeoisie had failed to take the necessary first steps towards the conquest of power' (p. 97), thus depriving Cervantes of any possible class complex. The author's preoccupation with class sometimes even acquires the quality of wit, as when the success of Peter Wilkins among the Flying Indians in Robert Paltock's novel is characterized as follows: 'His superiority is entirely that of the bourgeois man in a feudal society, which more than compensates for his inability to fly' (p. 112). Even more startling is the discovery that line in drawing is in itself class-conditioned. Blake, defending it against the rule of dots and lozenges, 'was implicitly defending the belief

that the part cannot exist without the whole, the individual except in relation to the class of which he is a member' (p. 123). If Blake's Jerusalem did not materialize this was, Mr. Morton asserts regretfully, because in early nineteenth-century England the masses 'did not yet constitute a working class in the modern sense of the term. So the regeneration of humanity could only be the work of the genius, the exceptional man imposing his will upon the herd' (p. 129). If more recent instances of such procedure come to mind, Mr. Morton is unconcerned. Bellamy is severely criticized for his multitude of mechanical devices, but nothing is brought forth in evidence of the reality of the Workers' Paradise except schemes of irrigation. Perhaps it is not entirely our own fault if some of us are slow 'to learn that Reason itself has a class basis' (p. 116).

There are good things in Mr. Morton's book, notably in his criticism of H. G. Wells, but his extreme irritation with Orwell and Mr. Aldous Huxley betrays the weakness of his position.

H. W. DONNER

**A History of English Drama 1660-1900.** By ALLARDYCE NICOLL. Vol. I, Pp. vii+462. Vol. II, Pp. viii+467. Vol. III, Pp. vi+423. Cambridge: University Press, 1952. 35s. net each volume.

*A History of Restoration Drama* was first published in 1923, and was followed at intervals by four further studies, each dealing with the English drama and theatre of a half-century: the last of these, *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama*, was first published in 1946. There is no need now to underline the importance of Professor Nicoll's undertaking, both in the discovery and ordering of his material and in laying a foundation for the research of other scholars. Though the earlier volumes in the series have from time to time been partially revised, we can now indeed welcome the much more thorough revision that is being published under the collective title given above. The three volumes here noticed bring the story down to 1800: two more volumes (each in two parts) will be added to complete the revised edition. To meet the convenience of printing, the page-arrangement of the previous editions has been kept as far as possible, but it is clear that each page has been thoroughly re-examined, with corrections of fact and modifications of judgement skilfully worked in.

In some parts, however, much more extensive alterations have been made. Inevitably this is seen most often in the first volume, for the work done on Restoration drama in the last thirty years has been considerable in bulk and has helped to establish a fuller knowledge and a more balanced attitude than were easily possible in the early days of rediscovery. In Volume I, therefore, at the end of each chapter there is a supplementary section outlining recent contributions to our knowledge of the matter in hand; Appendix A ('History of the Playhouses: 1660-1700') has been entirely rewritten and much expanded; Appendix C ('Hand-list of Restoration Plays'), with many additions of titles, many corrections, and the insertion of evidence for dating, is now twice its original length. Moreover, each of the three chapters that make up the main body of the work has one section entirely rewritten. In 1923 Restoration drama was still viewed with unveiled suspicion, and it was impossible to avoid both a general hesitation

in making claims on its behalf and an occasional tendency to redress the balance by over-praise. Indeed, Professor Nicoll's new beginning to Chapter I makes precisely this point, that we should now be free to form even-handed judgements. He himself, for example, no longer describes Robert Gould's *The Rival Sisters* as rising 'to a truly tragic height', and Otway's *The Orphan* is no longer 'a masterpiece'. On the other hand, he has modified the statement that 'Mr. Limberham could contaminate a whole shoal of writers'. The new opening section of Chapter III ('Comedy') makes excellent use of Shirley and Brome in tracing connexions between Restoration and early seventeenth-century drama, and suggests that the 'Platonising' practices of Henrietta Maria's court formed part of the ancestry of both Restoration comedy and the heroic play.

Volumes II and III have not required drastic change, but there are scores of alterations of the smaller kind. Supplementary sections to each of the chapters and appendixes are grouped together at the end of each volume. It has now been possible to make use of the *Catalogue of the Larpent Plays in the Huntington Library* (1939) for Appendix C in Volume II. There is an unexplained omission of Section iii ('Foreign Plays acted in London') of Appendix B in Volume III, and in the same volume some of the footnotes still refer to the earlier volumes under the old titles. On page 132 of Volume III there is a reference to the Preface to that volume, but the Preface is not included in this edition.

None of the volumes now has an index of plays, as it is intended to give in a final volume a comprehensive play-index for the whole work. This, of course, will ultimately be a most useful arrangement: it also gives one an additional reason for hoping that the later volumes will appear soon. Of its very nature, Professor Nicoll's work in this *History* can never be 'complete'. But, though some further revision may yet be made, major changes are unlikely. We shall for a long time use the work in its present form, and use it we must.

CLIFFORD LEECH

**Studies in Bibliography. Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia. Volume V, 1952-3.** Edited by FREDSON BOWERS. Pp. iv+230. Charlottesville, Virginia: Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, 1952. \$6.00.

The interests of the contributors to this finely produced miscellany range from fifteenth-century manuscripts to twentieth-century printing, and from elaborate bibliographical description to the critical analysis of an author's revisions. The eleven essays and thirteen 'Bibliographica' in the book vary considerably in quality and importance; and a reviewer can do no more than make a personal selection for comment.

Probably the most valuable contribution is Mr. R. E. Hasker's 'The Copy for the First Folio *Richard II*'. The late A. W. Pollard made an exhaustive examination of the Quarto and Folio texts in *A New Shakespeare Quarto: The Tragedy of King Richard II* (1916). Pollard considered whether the Folio text might have been based on an exemplum of Q3 (1598<sup>b</sup>) containing some leaves from a copy of Q5 (1615), but declared in favour of the traditional view that the Folio printers

used a copy of Q5 corrected with the theatre prompt-book. In *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* (1951) Sir Walter Greg confines himself to the conservative opinion that F was printed from either Q3 or Q5, 'it is not certain which'. But Mr. Hasker, in a thorough and scrupulous analysis of the three texts, returns to Pollard's speculation on a mixed quarto and shows it to have been correct. He faces squarely the problem of why Jaggard should have used a copy of Q3 supplemented from Q5. The copy of Q3, Mr. Hasker argues, was probably the official prompt-book of the King's Company, in which leaves from Q5 had been inserted either by a book-keeper or by the Folio editors to restore a lacuna. His speculations on the history of this made-up quarto are plausible, but they do not seriously affect his textual evidence. Since he begins his inquiry from Pollard's views on the nature of the copy for F, he might usefully have given some attention to Dr. Dover Wilson's divergence from Pollard in the New Cambridge *Richard II*, where it is suggested that a manuscript prompt-book 'made out from Shakespeare's "foul papers" in 1595' was held in the theatre library and eventually used to correct a copy of Q5 for the First Folio.

Professor W. B. Todd discusses the issues and states of the Second Folio. He rejects the late R. M. Smith's arrangement of the issues of the book, 'following the order of improvement', in favour of another and much more convincing sequence based on the hypothesis that 'the Title-Effigies sheet was, for various reasons, deliberately underprinted, and then, as the occasion required, twice reset at some later time to dispose of remainders. . . . Possibly, then, the order is . . . one of degradation rather than improvement'. Apart from its intrinsic value, this essay is noteworthy as a model of painstaking bibliographical analysis and logical argument.

Of more general interest is an account of the text of the *Spectator* by Professor D. F. Bond, who is preparing a critical edition. Professor Bond makes a preliminary survey of the original folio sheets, the first octavo edition and the first duodecimo edition, all of which have some claim to be used as copy-text. His analysis strongly supports the current view that a first printing will usually be freest from contamination and closest in accidentals to the author's manuscript, and points to a large number of substantive alterations in the octavo and duodecimo editions which are unmistakably revisions by the authors. It does not come as a surprise to learn that Steele revised much less conscientiously than Addison did. Professor Bond says much that will be of value to editors of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts, and his edition promises to be far more reliable than any that we now have; but it is doubtful whether any important purpose has been served in writing up, in such a form and at such length, an account of the textual history of the *Spectator* which must be provided directly or by implication in his edition.

Another elaborate account by a working editor of a textual history and an author's revisions is Mr. W. R. Keast's essay on Johnson's Preface to the *Dictionary*. Mr. Keast's contribution is excessively comprehensive. He admits, for instance, that the accidental variants in the second edition of the *Dictionary* 'are not of great importance, and there is no clear sign that Johnson is responsible for any of them'; but he unloads them all notwithstanding on the reader. His

conclusions, however, are of some importance. Johnson made two complementary sets of revisions. The second edition (1755-6) was printed from the first (1755) and revised by the author; the fourth (1773) was also printed from the first, and contains revisions quite independent of those in the second edition. Each set thus 'represents, for certain passages in the Preface, Johnson's "final intention"'.

Mr. T. H. Johnson, who is editing the poems and papers of Emily Dickinson, contributes a fascinating paper on the peculiar difficulties of his task. Many of Emily Dickinson's poems are undated; and Mr. Johnson describes his ingenious methods of establishing a chronology from the gradual changes in his author's handwriting, aided by a knowledge of the effects of a progressive illness on her eyesight and by a close examination of the note-paper she used at different times.

A recurrent weakness in this miscellany, and one for which the editor as well as the contributors should carry responsibility, is diffuseness. Of this Mr. Harris Chewning's essay on the text of the 'Envoy to Alison' is the most striking example. To illustrate the methods of 'the distributional study of texts', Mr. Chewning examines the relationships of the versions of this 27-line ballade in two manuscripts and seven black-letter editions of Chaucer. He applies the dismal science of statistics to the most minute variations in these texts—without providing the reader with a single version from which to make sense of his arguments—and struggles arduously to conclusions which might have been reached by common sense unaided by arithmetic. The methods which interest Mr. Chewning are undoubtedly valuable, and deserve to be illustrated in application to a more complex and intrinsically worthwhile problem.

The 'Bibliographica' at the end of the book are closely printed in a small type. Some of these essays are long and commendably detailed bibliographical descriptions and arguments, and might have changed places, to the greater comfort of the reader, with more discursive contributions standing towards the beginning of the book in the dignity of large type.

JAMES KINSLEY

**The Phonemes of English: A Phonemic Study of the Vowels and Consonants of Standard English.** By A. COHEN. Pp. viii+128. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952. 6 guilders.

In view of the weighty contributions by English-speaking scholars to the development of a theory of the phoneme, it is remarkable that no explicit and systematic account of the phonemes of English should have appeared until 1952. Phonematic analysis is at least implicit in the work of all who have used a method of broad phonetic transcription, and several scholars have made incidental discussion of striking or controversial features of the phonematic system of English, but Mr. Cohen is the first formally to set himself the task of making 'a phonemic study of the vowels and consonants of standard English'. His work opens with a review of general problems of phonematic study, in the course of which he describes phonemes as 'The sound elements as far as they can be proved to have significant functions within the word' (p. 19). There follow inventories of English consonant- and vowel-phonemes with an account of the possible positional combinations of each. The work is not intended 'to give a complete picture



of English phonemics' (p. 41); there is, in particular, practically no information about what the members of each phoneme are in Received Standard.

Mr. Cohen's method is sound in that he accepts in evidence only those linguistic facts that 'can be established empirically, by observing the behaviour of speaker and listener towards linguistic forms, without interpreting it psychologically' (p. 14). It is less satisfactory in taking the word as the unit of utterance within which the phonematic system functions. In making this limitation Mr. Cohen follows the example of Professors A. J. B. N. Reichling and Daniel Jones. He mentions, but makes no serious attempt to refute, the (to my mind conclusive) arguments of Professor J. R. Firth for taking as matter for analysis the actual units of speech—'pieces, phrases, clauses and sentences'.<sup>1</sup> Here is an element of artificiality which must strike us as very odd, since one of the few patches of ground common to all who believe in the phoneme is the acknowledgement that it is a phenomenon of the *spoken* language. Only by taking the complete utterance as our unit of analysis can we find a satisfactory explanation of such inter-verbal phenomena as potential linking [r] (realized in the same phonetic contexts as medially within the word); silence as a member of the /t/-phoneme in the pronunciation of *Act Two*; and the phonematic lengthening of final [-m] in [plam: pai] (cf. [plamp ai], where the phonetic context is comparable, and [plam ɪe pai], where the verbal position is the same; both have short [m]: recognition-tests show that it is the length of the [m] rather than the aspiration of the [p] that distinguishes the first two utterances). At another level the lengthening would be described as prosodic, because it results from a difference of stress-pattern. It is perhaps unfortunate to separate the two types of study.

The so-called phonemicist can analyse only one 'language' at a time, and by 'language' he should mean the pronunciation of 'an imaginary "average" person speaking consistently in a particular style'.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cohen's concern is with 'Standard British English', but he is not sufficiently committed to one person's usage or to one style (though in general he works, as recommended by Passy and Jones, with a *prononciation familière valentie*). He speaks, for instance, of 'obliterated phonemes' in the pronunciation [ɪ'kju:] for [θæŋk ju:] (pp. 50-51). As the terms of the comparison are not different phonemes but different phonematic systems, the argument based on this evidence is invalid. The fact that in some people's speech intrusive [r] blurs the difference between the *law of the land* and the *lore of the land*<sup>3</sup> does not tell us anything about the phonematic status of [r]: it shows that (at least) two systems are current in these utterances; similarly, [ʌ] is phonematically distinguished from [w] (cf. *which*, *witch*) in the speech of those who have both sounds.<sup>4</sup> Standard English has several concurrent phonematic systems, some more precise, some more economical (i.e. more dependent on contextual illumination).

The question of what standard usage is in vocabulary also bears upon

<sup>1</sup> 'Sounds and Prosodies', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1948, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Jones, 'Some Thoughts on the Phoneme', *Transactions of the Philological Society*, 1944, p. 127. This article does not appear in Mr. Cohen's list of 'Publications Consulted'.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 88-89.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. p. 58.



Mr. Cohen's work. The editors of *O.E.D.* point out that 'the circle of the English language has a well-defined centre but no discernible circumference';<sup>1</sup> they adopt, however, a wider radius than Mr. Cohen, who rejects as foreign such words as *tsetse*, *sthenic*, *phthisic* (pp. 43, 54-55). The exclusion from the English phonematic system of the initial clusters of these words (and, one might add, of those in *chthonian* and in the alternative pronunciation of *psychology*) results in distortion, since it is a relevant fact of modern English that it assimilates comparatively faithfully borrowings from certain languages even when they contain alien sound-combinations. The reasons for this are social and educational, but the fact is linguistic. It will not do to exclude the initial clusters /ts/, /sθ/, &c., as non-productive (to borrow a term from morphology), because the idea of linguistic productivity is diachronic (a form either has been or will be produced) and the 'phonemicist's' job is to describe the working of a given *état de langue*. He can tell us that certain initial clusters are very rare; when he adds that they will remain so his subject has ceased to be the phoneme.

It remains to comment on some points of detail. Since the matter of Mr. Cohen's analysis is not the speech of a single person he should indicate that the following represent a, not the, R.S. pronunciation of the words concerned: [fjɔ:d] *ford*, p. 56; [kɒdliŋ] *coddling*, p. 63; [widθ] *width*, p. 68 (cf. the alternatives given in *O.E.D.* and in Professor Daniel Jones's *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*, 4th edition, 1937). Neither dictionary has [su:t] *soot* (cf. p. 57), a clearly dialectal pronunciation. The erroneous transcription of *range* as [reinʒ] is serious since the result of a substitution-test depends upon it (p. 46: curiously enough, the correct transcription appears on p. 69). A parallel error appears in [tʃeɪnʒ] for *change*, p. 67, causing /ʒ/ to be classified here as a prefinal element in a biphonematic final cluster. For what it is worth I record that my own experience of the instinctive groupings of untrained English speakers is the reverse of that quoted by Mr. Cohen from Sapir: 'no naive English-speaking person can be made to feel in his bones that it (sc. [ŋ]) belongs to a single series with [m] and [n]' (p. 47). The sentence beginning at l. 3 of p. 11 should presumably open with the words 'Bilabial and dental' not 'Bilabial and velar'.

Mr. Cohen's punctuation sometimes departs from normal English usage and his choice of word and phrase is not always happy—I note the use of *aprioristic*, pp. 17 and 36; *reasons for which procedure*, p. 39; *The system is to be concluded at*, p. 44. He has dual forms for some derivatives of the word *phoneme*: the widely current formations on the stem *phonem-* side by side with those more regularly formed on *phonemat-*.

Mr. Cohen's subject is important, his treatment often illuminating, his indexes extremely useful, but his work is marred both by the adoption of some dubious procedures and by errors of detail.

BARBARA M. H. CARR

<sup>1</sup> General Explanations. The Vocabulary.

## SHORT NOTICES

**A Handbook of Middle English.** By FERNAND MOSSÉ. Translated by JAMES A. WALKER. Pp. xxiv+495. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1952; London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1953. \$5.50; 45s. net.

This handsome translation of M. Mossé's *Manuel* includes a certain amount of additional material. In the grammatical introduction a summary of the origin of the Middle English vowels and diphthongs is included, the development of *æ* has been completely rewritten, and occasional explanatory notes and references have been added. The various bibliographies in the book have been brought up to date, and some of the introductions to the individual texts, notably that to the *Fox and the Wolf* and that to the extracts from Gower, have been enlarged, and additional material not infrequently inserted in others. Another lyric, *Sunset on Calvary*, is included, along with extracts from the *Vices and Virtues* and from Caxton's *Ryall Book* illustrating that given from the *Ayenbite*. Some of the textual notes have been elaborated, and occasionally an entirely new one is introduced. As a rule this additional material does much to increase the value of M. Mossé's excellent book, but this is not invariably the case, and of particularly doubtful value is the introduction of length-marks for the vowels in the Index of Proper Names and in the Glossary. Besides this, two of the illustrations, a page from the *Ancrene Wisse* and one from the *Ayenbite*, have been omitted from the English version, though referred to in the text (p. 8) as if they were still included.

The translation itself is occasionally so literal as to be unidiomatic. Sometimes the non-recognition of a particular French idiom has resulted in a misleading English version, and in some cases actual mistakes appear. But on the whole the translation is adequate, though perhaps hardly equal to the excellent production of the volume. Unfortunately the price will make its use as a text-book in this country quite impossible.

R. M. WILSON

**Our Exploits at West Pooley.** By THOMAS HARDY. Pp. 110. London: Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1952. 9s. 6d. net.

It may not be true that Victorian novelists 'appear to have written mainly for juveniles', but this work—buried, until Professor Purdy's (limited) edition, in the files of an American periodical—certainly seems to show that Hardy's defects as a novelist become positive advantages when he writes for children. A symmetrical plot, for instance, allows just the element of repetition essential to a good children's story. Of course the President of the Immortals is not involved, but only two boys who by deflecting a subterranean stream cut off the water supply of one village and give it to another, previously dry; the alternating reactions of first one set of inhabitants and then the other raise and fulfil exactly the kind of expectation by which *The Three Bears* continues to charm. Not that Hardy aims at so very young an audience—the dialogue (which could well have been simpler) and the classical allusions (with their hint of the effort which cries up Eustacia Vye as Queen of Night) show this. And where characters are set forth only in the general terms of the cautionary tale, a neat plot with two or three amusing episodes and a double climax may command admiration even from much older readers. The cautionary element, too, although it is carefully explicit in the risks the hero runs and the final good resolutions which make him 'now the largest gentleman-farmer of those parts, remarkable for his avoidance of anything like speculative exploits', has also overtones of wider importance: the stated impossibility of doing 'good to one set of folks without harming another' leaves open the whole question of evil, and this seems intentional in a tale which comes between *Two on a Tower* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*; the insistence upon 'the quiet perseverance in clearly defined courses' seems, equally, just to touch Hardy's nostalgic regard for the pastoral pieties of his own childhood. *Our Exploits at West Pooley* may not be a momentous addition to the canon but it clearly has its place.

E. A. HORSMAN

**A Memoir and a List of the Published Writings of Sir William A. Craigie.**  
Pp. 38. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952. 6s. net.

To many scholars of a younger generation Sir William Craigie is perhaps best known as co-editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*; but this bibliography furnishes abundant proof of his activities in other fields. Indefatigable supporter of the Society for Pure English until its untimely close, co-editor of *A Dictionary of American English*, editor of three volumes of Icelandic *rimur*, editor of a supplement to Vigfusson's *Icelandic Dictionary*, editor of seven selections of Anglo-Saxon prose and poetry—the list of his publications occupies nine pages and eight categories.

Yet it may be that, as the present writer thinks, the clue to this manifold activity is contained in one word—Scotland. For Sir William, though a citizen of the world, has never ceased to be a lover of his own country, its language, its literature, and its people. From this sprang his interests in Celtic, Scandinavian, and Frisian: he has edited two of the four main sources of Middle Scots poetry, and his *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* has occupied a steady share of his time since his retirement from academic duties.

The presentation to Sir William, in October 1952, of his portrait, with this memoir and bibliography, in token of having attained his eighty-fifth anniversary, did not mark the end of his work. Indeed, those who have talked or corresponded with him, and know his keen analytical mind, know also that more publications will come from 'Ridgehurst'. He is but eighty-five years young.

A. MACDONALD

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## THE PROPHETIC CÆDMON

By G. SHEPHERD

**B**EDE'S story of Cædmon provides certainly the best-known account in early English history of a heavenly gift of song; but there are others, and some of them reflect a considerable light upon the nature of the so-called 'miracle' of Bede's story. The wonder remains, but ceases to be a stumbling-block: in fact it serves to emphasize the outstanding importance of Cædmon's *Hymn* in our early literary history.

### I

In a consideration of comparable accounts of a gift of utterance, reference may first be made to an incident in which utterance is for a time apparently inhibited. A generation before Cædmon, in East Anglia, the Abbot Fursey, a holy man from Ireland, had been found worthy to see heavenly visions. In his infirmity, one day towards evening, while he was occupied in psalmody and prayer, suddenly he fell into a trance and was carried home as one dead. In his trance his soul was borne aloft by angels singing the half-verse, *Ibunt sancti de virtute in virtutem* (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). Now at the end of the flight, he heard another song, as it were unknown to him, sung by thousands of angels. Of this song he could grasp but a few words—*Exierunt autem obviam Christo*. For almost immediately, one of the heavenly host commanded the leading angelic guide to return the soul to the body. Returning, the angels sang the concluding half-verse, *Videbitur deus deorum in Sion* (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). In his delight at the sweetness of this song, Fursey could not understand how his soul re-entered his body.<sup>1</sup>

This incident is followed in the narrative by the account of the great and well-known vision in which Fursey sees all hell and heaven. The substance of the song-fragment of the first vision and the text of the angels' song link the two visions. They point quite clearly to what Fursey was to learn thereafter—the nature of the afterworld and the spiritual destiny of man. The communication, which is checked and incompletely apprehended in the first vision, is successfully received, at length and in detail, in the second. But the song-fragment of the first has stated the theme. Infirm and expecting death, Fursey, consciously or unconsciously, is willing a fuller knowledge of the after-life. It may be noted that this type of spiritual effort and this type of spiritual voyage are common features of mantic literature,

<sup>1</sup> *Vita S. Fursey abbatis*, ed. J. Mabillon, *Acta sanctorum ordinis S. Benedicti*, re-ed. by the monks of Solesmes, ii (1936-8), 301; cf. Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, iii. 19.

particularly among the Celts.<sup>1</sup> As Cædmon changed his way of life after the gift of song, so Fursey after these visions led, as the book of his life informs us, a still more devoted life. He retained a lively awareness of the content of the visions and acknowledged a sense of compulsion to communicate his message to the faithful.

But of all churchmen of late Anglo-Saxon England, the most remarkable, Dunstan of Canterbury, is also most remarkable for this gift of song. Often, according to his earliest biographer, Author B, in sleep he was inspired by the inhabitants of the heavenly courts.<sup>2</sup> The different lives tell in some detail of several such occasions. One must be sufficient here. After complicity and pious devotion one night, Dunstan in sleep was rapt to heaven. There he saw his own mother joined in marriage to a mighty king amid great rejoicing. From all sides rose hymns and music. While Dunstan listened in delight and attended with all his heart to what was going on, a young man clad in white brilliance came up to him and said: 'When you see and hear these choirs in jubilation, why do you not join it?' Dunstan replied that he did not know what to sing in honour of so great a king. So the young man taught him the antiphon, *O rex gentium*. In his vision Dunstan repeated the antiphon many times and in the morning, when he had risen from sleep, had it copied down lest it pass out of memory. Both Author B and Eadmer, who tell much the same story,<sup>3</sup> interpret the vision. The mother is to be understood as the Church. Author B adds that the young man was Dunstan's guardian angel.

Similarities with the Cædmon story are obvious enough. Here again is an account of a night vision, and of a visitant who mediates the unpremeditated song. As with Fursey's trance, so in this story of Dunstan, vision is preceded by psalmody and intense devotion and accompanied by the music of angelic choirs. The antiphon, as given by Author B, is of a recognizably traditional form. According to the contemporary interpretation,

<sup>1</sup> See N. K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy* (Cambridge, 1942), pp. 90 ff.; E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), pp. 140 ff. Aerial flight is not uncommonly associated with prophetic activities in accounts of English saints: e.g. Reginald of Durham, *Libellus de vita et miraculis S. Godrici heremite de Finchale*, ed. J. Stevenson, *Surtees Society*, xx (1847), 130, 193, 349; *Vita Bartholomaei anachoretae* in Symeon of Durham, *Opera*, i, ed. T. Arnold, Rolls Series (1882), appendix ii, 299; C. W. Jones, *Saints' Lives and Chronicles in Early England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1947), p. 140.

<sup>2</sup> '... quamvis hic carneo septus velamine degisset in imis, mente tamen sive vigilaret, sive somno detentus quiesceret, semper manebat in superis, ut Paulus ait apostolus, "Nostra autem conversatio in caelis est". Hoc nimirum sepiissime patuit, dum divina sacrorum modulaminum cantica quæ ab hominibus quidem nunquam acceptis, sed ex beatis supernæ regionis civibus per sopitalem revelationem capaci didicerat intellectu....'; *Memorials of St. Dunstan*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series (1874), p. 40; other references to Dunstan's gift or use of song, pp. 21, 41, 44, 48, 63, 170, 206-9, 316. The surviving *Kyrie rex splendens* is pretty certainly Dunstan's composition: see E. Bishop, W. Corney, and C. Butler, 'St. Dunstan's Kyrie', *Downside Review*, v (1885), 45-51.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials*, pp. 40-44, 205-6.

it is to be considered not simply as an expressive song of joy, but as a message directed through Dunstan at Dunstan's people.

Reginald of Durham's late-twelfth-century life of the anchorite Godric of Finchale also furnishes several accounts of vision productive of song.<sup>1</sup> The occasion upon which Godric received the first of his extant pieces, *Sainte marie virgine*, is treated in some detail. After a night of prayer, towards morning, Godric took a brief respite and looking above the altar saw two virgins. After contemplating them awhile, he completed the additions to the office in such a spirit of joy that his mind seemed almost freed from its earthly shell. At length the figures advanced towards him and the one revealed herself as the Blessed Virgin, and assured him of her patronage. She taught him a new song as if he were a boy at school. She sang it first and he sang it after her. The Virgin instructed him that whensoever he was troubled or tempted he should remember to soothe himself with this song.<sup>2</sup>

Again we have the night vision after concentrated prayer, the heavenly visitant and the reception of song. This song too is influenced by traditional form. It is a vernacular offshoot of the liturgy. Godric receives it as a defence against troubles—as a *lorica*.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, this first song-vision initiates for Godric a new phase in life. 'Exinde vero Domino semper devotius deservivit.'

A further story may be given, that of the lapsed monk of Melrose recounted in the life of St. Waltheow. In content it is similar to Fursey's second vision, but it is important in that it emphasizes the intimate and direct relation between the gift of knowledge and the gift of poetic utterance, apparent also in Bede's account of Cædmon. The anonymous *conversus* of Melrose had been tempted by the devil and for many years had lost the intellectual light of truth, though he still lived as a religious. But one midday as he rested, he saw two splendid figures who led him away into a pleasant garden. There they charged him with his errors. Looking round for comfort, he saw the abbot Waltheow sitting in state upon a high place and the monk besought his aid. Waltheow bade the guides show the man the wheel of fate and the penal places. All this the monk saw. In a second vision shortly afterwards he was shown the seats of the blest. When Waltheow had explained the significance of both visions, suddenly the monk was set down at the gates of Melrose, a wiser and converted man. The *Vita* continues:

Simplex ille frater ante visionem, et impedita lingue, ita eloquens et subtilis postea factus est, ut de euangeliiis, expositionibus, et historiis rithmos anglica

<sup>1</sup> *Libellus*, pp. 56, 101, 118, 144, 202, 205, 208, 286, 288-9, 306.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-20.

<sup>3</sup> See J. W. Rankin, 'The Hymns of St. Godric', *P.M.L.A.*, xxxviii (1923), 707.

lingua rethorice et venuste componeret, et audientes in admirationem conuersos ad lachrimas prouocaret.<sup>1</sup>

As far as is known, nothing of this monk's work remains.

## 11

It is recounted of this same monk of Melrose and of Dunstan that some time before they died they came to know the hour of their death. As Bede believed, Cædmon too possessed this knowledge. The detail is commonplace in the lives of the saints, but here it can serve as a pointer to the nature of the strange gifts which all of these men had received. The manner in which Author B introduces the story of Dunstan's marriage-vision is still more revealing. It is the first of a series of stories designed to illustrate what Author B considered to be Dunstan's outstanding spiritual gift. It was a gift of heavenly knowledge: in fact the gift of prophecy. In turn all the biographers emphasize Dunstan's powers of foresight, clairvoyance, and inspired utterance. His whole life and all his works were touched with this mysterious power which to some of his opponents and to some modern historians has appeared almost sinister. After centuries he was remembered as a friend of God, 'revered by men, feared by devils, with power over all other creatures: as a hearer and singer of celestial songs . . . a teacher who taught men what the inhabitants of heaven taught him . . . a prophet of things to come, a spectator of things unseen, a traverser of the heavens, . . . the great shepherd of the Church like St. Peter, a governor of his country like Samuel, the director of kings like Isaiah, a man of raptures and secret knowledge like St. Paul, Ezekiel, and St. John.'<sup>2</sup> For this eulogist of the late twelfth century, Dunstan had the full stature of the authentic prophet. He was predictor, seer, oracle, as well as counsellor, pastor, and confessor of the faith.

The prophetic powers of Godric, too, are heavily stressed in the *Libellus*. For a decade before his death, Godric saw everything that happened within ten miles of his dwelling. He had the power to read men's thoughts, the shamanistic ability for 'bilocation', and the gift of tongues. He was consulted on national as well as local and domestic matters. Becket sought his advice as to the outcome of the struggle with King Henry. Reginald's pages are full of stories of waking vision and prophetic dream and strange spiritual encounters.

Prophecy is a common enough feature in the records of early England. But there was, of course, nothing peculiarly English in the activity. There

<sup>1</sup> C. Horstman, *Nova Legenda Anglie* (Oxford, 1901), ii, *De Sancto Walleuo abbate*, 409-11: *anglica lingua* added from *Vita* by Jordan (or Joscelyn) of Furness, p. 411.

<sup>2</sup> *Sermo de maxima laude S. Dunstani, Memorials*, pp. 454-6.



were prophets in all early Christian societies. Gregory the Great provides several stories of prophetic wonder in the *Dialogues*: he also provides a rationale of prophecy in the *Homilies on Ezekiel*. According to Gregory, the revelation of the future is the major part of prophecy; yet he does not limit it in this way. Prophecy may be truth about the past: it can illuminate present mysteries also. Indeed prophecy is best defined as the disclosing of hidden things,<sup>1</sup> whether hidden in time or thought or place. It is the communication of a secret knowledge and possesses an unquestionable authority, requiring no corroboration from other evidence.<sup>2</sup> The prophet sees things spiritually where we see them corporeally. To his senses, things are present which to ours in our ignorance are not there. In his mind, internal things are so linked with external things that both are seen together indistinguishably.<sup>3</sup> What he sees is a vision of a real and spiritual truth.

But it is not the prophet who originates prophecy. As Gregory explains elsewhere, in prophecy either God Himself speaks, or He speaks through an angelic mediator. When God Himself speaks, the heart is instructed without syllables by an interior illumination which fills the mind and at the same time concentrates it. Such illumination is soundless discourse.<sup>4</sup> If an angel communicates he may give a verbal message or he may actually possess a man: he may communicate by signs, either by appearance to the eye of the heart or in a momentary corporeal vision; and there are various other modes of angelic communication too.<sup>5</sup> In effect, the prophetic consciousness is the reception of a message—an audition. But whereas the ear by its mode of operation cannot at once understand all that is intended—for it can perceive only by means of sounds in succession—the sight can seize immediately upon that to which it is directed. The message is thus thought of as seen rather than heard.<sup>6</sup>

Gregory's account which is full and penetrating indicates that he was dealing with current manifestations of the spirit and not simply rationalizing the testimony of the Old Testament prophets. Indeed his analysis of the scope and nature of prophecy provides remarkable similarities with other investigations conducted at other times and independently.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'recte prophetia dicitur, non quia praedicit ventura, sed quia prodit occulta'; Gregory, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem lib. I*, 1, 1, Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, lxxvi, col. 787.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1, 3, col. 788.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 2, 2, col. 796.

<sup>4</sup> Gregory, *Moralium lib. XXVIII: in cap. xxxviii Iob*, 1, 2, P.L. lxxvi, col. 447.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 1, 3-9, cols. 448-51.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1, 2, col. 448.

<sup>7</sup> For references, covering a wide range of time and place, see N. K. Chadwick, *op. cit.*; E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, ch. v; A. Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and other Semites* (London, 1938).



## III

Prophetism wherever it occurs is almost invariably linked with song.<sup>1</sup> When Elisha was required by Jehoshaphat to prophesy, a minstrel was summoned. 'And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him' (2 Kings iii. 15). Using this text, Gregory affirms that with music, the prophetic mood can be invoked. Through psalmody, a way to the heart is prepared by the omnipotent God, who can thus pour into the concentrated mind either the secrets of prophecy or the grace of compunction.<sup>2</sup>

In England, recorded acts of prophecy are commonly associated with psalmody.<sup>3</sup> Music provided the pre-condition of emotional excitation necessary for the prophetic mood. But psalmody also provided habitual prophetics with a method of controlling the attention and the direction of the will. Particularly significant is John of Ford's comment on the ecstasy of Wulfric the hermit of Haselbury, a rustic and illiterate recluse, but an outstanding prophetic of the early twelfth century. Wulfric was wont to recite the Psalter daily. In the eyes of his biographer it was precisely because the hermit was able to direct an unfaltering and unbroken attention to this recitation of the entire Psalter that prophetic ecstasy was attainable.<sup>4</sup>

But chant or music is not only a stimulus to prophecy, it appears also as accompaniment. And this is natural enough. For the prophetic moment, as has been noted already, though in effect an audition, which is usually and quite accurately conceptualized as a verbal message, is in itself ineffable, and accordingly in its totality is conceived most adequately as simply musical. In most accounts, the prophetic audition is spoken of in a context of music. When the lapsed monk of Melrose was borne away to heaven he heard celestial music. Fursey's vision begins in the same way. Dunstan in exile at Ghent was instructed as to the future of Glastonbury in a vision of his monks there at chant. It may be noted here that this particular inci-

<sup>1</sup> See N. K. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 8, 45 ff.; E. R. Dodds, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 175 note 119; A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-33, especially 310 ff., with a full summary of the illuminating teaching of Algazel.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory, *Homiliarum in Ezechielem lib. I*, i, 15, *P.L.*, lxxvi, col. 793. This passage is expanded as preface to *De psalmodum usu*, *P.L.*, ci, col. 465 (formerly ascribed to Alcuin; but see A. Wilmart in *Revue Bénédictine*, xlviii (1936), 262 ff.), and summarized by Hugh of St. Victor, *Miscellanea*, lib. iii, tit. cxxx, *P.L.*, clxxvii, col. 700.

<sup>3</sup> A few (for many) instances may be given where specific mention of psalmody or chant precedes prophecy. Bede, *E.H.*, ii, 6, iii, 25; Horstman, *N.L.A.*, i, 102-3, 331, 334, 373, ii, 342, 406-7, 408, 705-6; *Memorials*, pp. 27, 207, 315; *Libellus*, pp. 206, 211, 221, 285, 352. According to the *vitae* unusual attention was paid to psalmody by Kentigern, Guthlac, Neot, Bartholomew of Farne, Wulfric of Haselbury; all were prophetics; cf. also H. E. Allen's note, *English Writings of Richard Rolle* (Oxford, 1931), p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> Wulfric of Haselbury by John, *Abbot of Ford*, ed. M. Bell, Somerset Record Society, xlvii (1933), 35 ff.

dent also furnishes a good example of vision related to a mental preoccupation. Dunstan on many occasions was rapt by heavenly concerts. His reputation as a musician and his influence upon church music are well known.

But the most important function of chant or music is not as stimulus to the prophetic mood, nor as accompaniment of vision, but as a pressure which is applied to the form of the message. Where prophetic utterance rises from a context of music it is usually shaped into measure or rhythm.<sup>1</sup> It is in fact verse and exhibits the metrical as well as the rhetorical features of verse. Indeed the rhythm or measure and the rhetoric may be remarkably elaborate, but they depend upon the musical and rhetorical forms of the seer's culture. What is so mysterious in the utterance is that the words should come made up ready into the elaborated form. Only to the prophet himself is this no mystery, for it is in this elaborated form that he has received the message. It is apparent from our stories that in the act of reception, the prophet is not consciously active at all. The message is a communication between the external power and his fellow men in which he is the instrument of transmission. The message itself is thus peculiarly detached from his ordinary consciousness. When King Henry I disapproved of what Wulfric had foretold, the saint, with admirable discretion, but with full awareness of the prophetic process, replied: 'Si dixi, non me pœnitet, quia ex me non sum locutus.'<sup>2</sup> But because the prophetic, and hence his people, regard the utterance as not his own but given, its integrity of form is sacrosanct. The full meaning exists in the exact words in which it was received. The meaning makes the form sacred, the form makes the meaning complete.

This acceptance of the integrity of the prophetic text is apparently to be connected with the general primitive belief that words themselves possess and exert power. The reception of the prophetic message was sometimes accompanied by the manifestation of this power. While Dunstan was riding to seek King Edred, a voice from heaven informed him that the king was dead. At this voice, the horse upon which the saint rode fell lifeless 'quia non valebat sublimitatis angelicæ sufferre præsentiā'.<sup>3</sup> The words of a prophetic even when speaking *casu non studio* released a dreadful force. Wulfric one day in his cell, noticing that his new cape had been nibbled,

<sup>1</sup> See N. K. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 1; cf. the description of the Nun of Kent quoted by R. M. Clay, *The Hermits and Anchorites of England* (London, 1914), p. 188: '... she entred the Chappell with *Ave Regina Cœlorum* in pricksong. . . . There fell she eftsoones into a marvellous passion . . . much like a bodie diseased . . . , in the which she uttered sundry metrical and ryming speeches. . . .'

<sup>2</sup> *Wulfric*, ed. Bell, p. 116; cf. Godric's use of the third person in speaking of himself, *Libellus*, pp. 18, 172, 222.

<sup>3</sup> *Memorials*, p. 31.

without thinking cried: 'Perish the mouse that has so damaged my cape.' A mouse fell dead at his feet.<sup>1</sup> In large measure a prophet was the slave to his own utterance, as Balaam, a witness to the truth in spite of himself. There existed, moreover, as has been noted already, a compulsion after vision to deliver the words of truth and power in formal speech—speech which is both measured and constrained by a traditional rhetoric.

## IV

Bede's story of Cædmon conforms closely to the general type of accounts of acts of prophecy. At the same time, there is in his narrative sufficient individual variation and suggestion of further detail to afford guarantees of its authenticity. The frame of the story is a night-vision in which through the agency of a heavenly visitant,<sup>2</sup> utterance in song is received which is afterwards to be communicated to the world. In essentials, it is in the almost unvaried style of acts of prophecy. In Cædmon's case too, before vision there is, in the entertainment of the hall, the usual stimulus in song. It is, we may agree, impossible to know what went on in Cædmon's mind that night. But a motivation for his departure from the hall is provided in the Old English version of the *Ecclesiastical History* by the insertion of the words *for some* (MS. Tanner 10). It is likely enough that Cædmon's inability to sing, together perhaps with some scorn for worldly merry-making, troubled his mind as he went to rest. His answer to the visitant tells the same story. The vision appears to have arisen out of a mental preoccupation consciously or unconsciously pursued. Certainly it is in such circumstances as these that prophetic visions were commonly received.<sup>3</sup>

It is generally agreed, and now indeed it should be expected, that the *Hymn* was composed in the complicated metrical and rhetorical form of the traditional heroic alliterative verse.<sup>4</sup> The poem is not simply the expression

<sup>1</sup> *Wulfic*, ed. Bell, p. 46; cf. the story of Dunstan, Alwold and the foxes, *Memorials*, pp. 313-14.

<sup>2</sup> Although Bede's use of the indefinite *quidam* does not specify that the visitant was an angel, Cædmon's inspiration according to Gregory's teaching would certainly be recognized as angelic. Where there is no visible appearance, God may still be said to speak through an angel when words of supernal utterance are received (*Moralium lib. XXVIII, P.L.*, lxxvi, col. 449). God communicating thus with human intelligence necessarily communicates through the agency of a rational creature, i.e. 'per creaturam angelicam' (*ibid.*, cols. 449, 447). 'Nec mirum quod illic ipsi qui suscepti sunt, modo angeli, modo Dominus vocantur, quia angelorum vocabulo exprimentur qui exterius ministrabant, et appellatione Domini ostenditur qui eis interius præerat, ut per hoc præsentis imperium, ut per illud claresceret officium ministrantium' (*ibid.*, col. 450).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. above, Furse's vision and Dunstan's vision at Ghent; and see A. Guillaume, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

<sup>4</sup> See C. L. Wrenn, *The Poetry of Cædmon* (Sir Israel Gollancz Memorial Lecture, British Academy, 1946), pp. 10 ff.

of a private revelation. It is an acclamation of the Creator, but it is directed towards a human audience. It is didactic, a statement of a cosmogony, an exhortation as well as instruction for the people. In this respect the plural first person of the opening line is significant. Poetry here is used as a means of implanting knowledge.

After the night vision, the course of Cædmon's life is changed. For him, as for the monk of Melrose, the sudden gift of song remained. The poems Cædmon was to compose thereafter were still essentially didactic. His themes were to be either 'historical' or 'doctrinal', as Bede says: these categories together make up the lore which the prophets habitually expound to their people. Bede's account of Cædmon's career indicates that the man had been infused with a strong reforming zeal and an urgent moral purpose; with an extraordinarily capacious memory and an unusual power of mental concentration. Such are the virtues usually to be found in the prophetic.

Obviously for Bede the *Hymn* retained its original divine quality. It is not usual for a medieval Latin historian to be apologetic as Bede is for the Latin version of a vernacular composition. The prestige of the piece endured. The vernacular text is preserved in no less than seventeen manuscripts, ranging over many centuries, coming from many different parts. The classification of these manuscripts according to variation and dialect indicates that slightly different texts existed from a relatively early period.<sup>1</sup> Though the history of these manuscripts is complex, it is most unlikely that the preserved texts of the *Hymn* all derive from a single manuscript source. Nevertheless the variations in these texts are remarkably trivial. It would appear that the *Hymn* was in general circulation among the Anglo-Saxons and at the same time the integrity of the text was precious to them. The *Hymn* in fact retained the authority of its divine origin. As Bede indicated, it was the exemplar of their religious verse: a standard of excellence as well as a model for imitation.

Much modern criticism has looked askance at the vision setting of the *Hymn*. But the several analogues that have been brought forward to illustrate the story,<sup>2</sup> should be used to give status in literary history to the existence of prophetic verse, rather than as material upon which to exercise the modern instinct for incredulity. For it is precisely the setting, this story of song received in vision, that makes Cædmon's position in

<sup>1</sup> See E. van K. Dobbie, *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song* (New York, 1937).

<sup>2</sup> Bede, *Opera Historica*, ed. C. Plummer (Oxford, 1876), ii, note C, 254-8; N. S. Auner, 'Bede and Pausanias', *M.L.N.*, xli (1926), 535-6; F. Klaeber, 'Analogues of the Story of Cædmon', *ibid.*, xlii (1927), 390; L. Pound, 'Cædmon's Dream Song', *Klaeber Miscellany* (Minneapolis, 1929), pp. 232-9; L. Whitbread, 'An Analogue of the Cædmon Story', *R.E.S.*, xv (1939), 333-5.

literary history intelligible. Cædmon was a prophetic; his *Hymn* the first of a long line of English writings in the prophetic tradition.<sup>1</sup> Poetry is only one manifestation of this tradition. There were prophetics in England before Cædmon, and the field of prophecy in England as elsewhere remained, and for long after Cædmon's time much larger than that of poetry. It should be plain that a purely literary examination cannot characterize prophetic writings and that artistic or verbal judgements by themselves are quite inadequate in assessing their importance. For this type of writing was not the product of a specialized literary impulse. Only when we recognize the authority that a prophetic origin gave these pieces can we see their power of influence and reason for survival.

Without doubt, Cædmon's gift, this gift recognized as of a divine origin, was powerful in establishing, as Bede indicates, the *Bibelpoetik* of Anglo-Saxon verse, both Latin and vernacular.<sup>2</sup> The writing of religious verse was for Bede a recognizable gift of the Spirit to be directly associated with the gift of Pentecostal tongues.<sup>3</sup> Alcuin also, as Aldhelm before him, explained poetic utterance by reference to the doctrine of the Logos. The poet seeks the word from the Word.<sup>4</sup> Speaking of the source of poetry, these men spoke at the same time of the inspiration received by the prophets Moses or David or Balaam. An acceptance of prophetic utterance is fundamental to their conception of poetry. Poetry thus was a publishing of secret knowledge.

Quis poterit digne rerum mysteria nosse,  
Aut abstrusa Dei gnaro cognoscere sensu?<sup>5</sup>

To that question there was an approved answer: only the man to whom utterance was given by the Spirit of all truth; the man whose lips were touched with prophetic fire. This was the gift actualized in the prophets of old, the gift that Hild's men believed they recognized in Cædmon. It may be suggested that many features of early English poetry, vernacular as well as Latin, may require interpretation in terms of this belief and in terms of the conventions which this belief in prophecy and the practice of prophecy engendered.

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion of N. K. Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 4, that Cædmon should be considered as 'the end of the Celtic rather than the beginning of the Saxon tradition' of prophetic poetry, is not convincing. Of course allowance must always be made for what was probably a substantial and continuing Celtic influence on the methods and forms of early English prophecy.

<sup>2</sup> See E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* (Berne, 1948), p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, Proemium, P.L., xciv, col. 577.

<sup>4</sup> See Aldhelm, *De laudibus virginum*, P.L., lxxxix, col. 239; *Ænigmatum liber*, Prologus, *ibid.*, cols. 183-4; Alcuin, *De pontificibus et sanctis ecclesie eboracensis*, P.L., ci, col. 814.

<sup>5</sup> Aldhelm, *De laudibus virginum*, P.L., lxxxix, col. 240.

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